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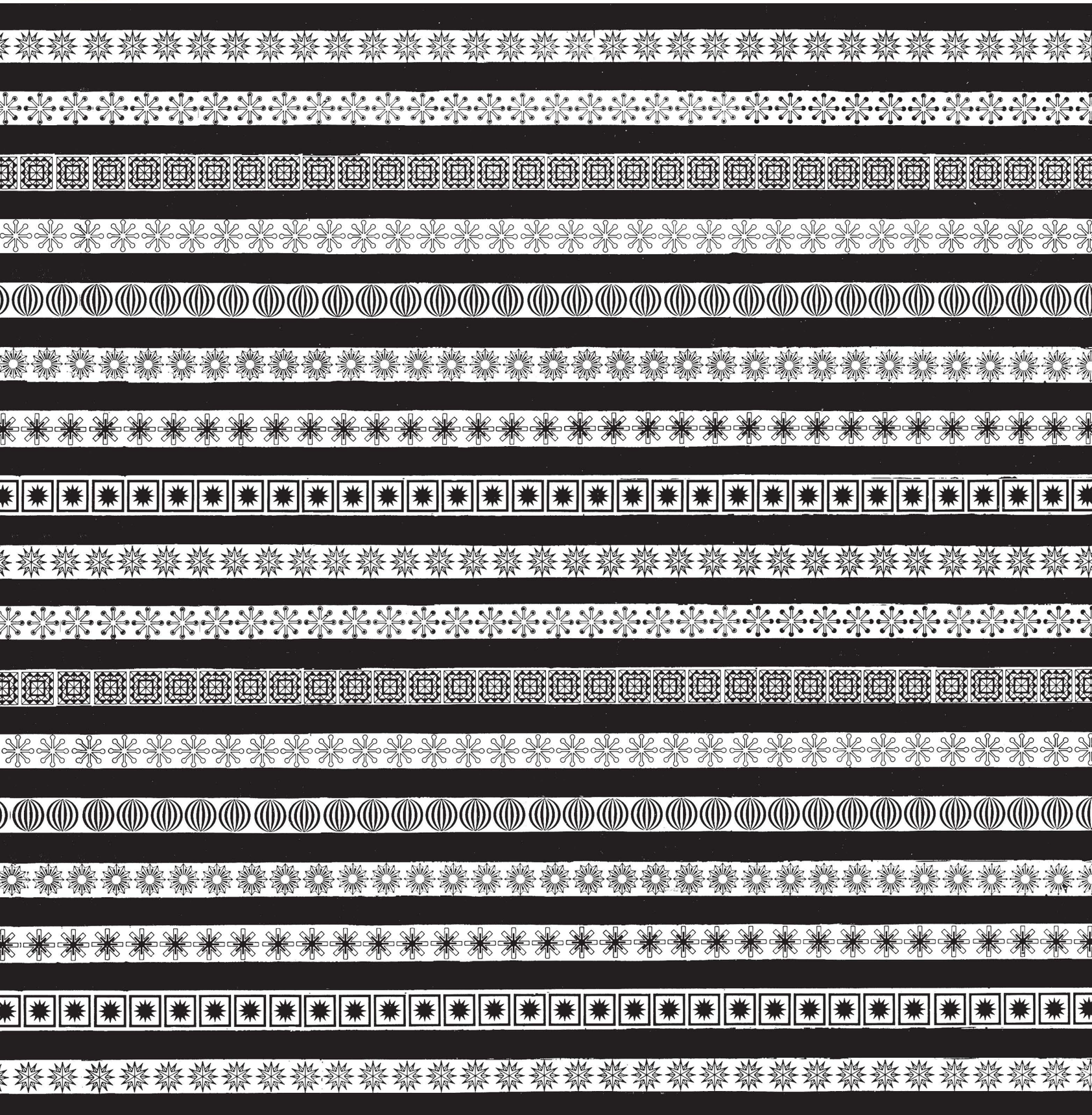

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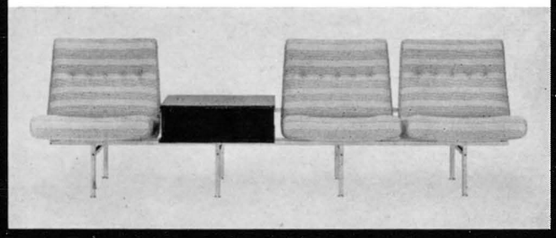

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Vol. 78, No. 8

MUSIC

PETER YATES

REVELATION IN ILLINOIS

When I was invited to lecture in April at the Biennial of Contemporary Arts of the University of Illinois, the date was chosen so that I might also be present at the first performances of Harry Partch's new dramatic composition with his own music—he calls it an Extravaganza—*Revelation in the Courthouse Park.**

Those of us who have watched for many years the slow growing of this strange, isolated workman, Harry Partch, have wondered in what direction his undoubted talent would eventuate. Discuss him as a composer, and he will tell you his music can exist only as accompaniment to words or ballet. He denies he has either the gift or the medium to be an absolute musician. I write of him as one of the more important of the American Experimental composers.

Certainly he began as a composer, writing conventional music, long since destroyed. A chance encounter with acoustically pure intervals instead of equal temperament turned him to musical experiment. The story and his conclusions are to be found in his book, *Genesis of a Music,* published by the University of Wisconsin. He came to feel that music should exist in acoustical purity, instead of the arbitrary mathematical compromise, neither quite consonant nor quite dissonant, to which we are all indiscriminately accustomed. Granted that this harsh and sonorously inadequate scale of equal temperament, in partial compliance with technical and harmonic rules not made for it, has been the medium of all music from Beethoven and Berlioz to Debussy and Schoenberg. The question is not whether by returning to a scale of acoustical purity we should have to give up Beethoven. The judgment would not be severer than that our present indiscriminacy of equal temperament has enacted against des Pres, Lassus, Palestrina, and Vittoria, or against the Elizabethans, or the Couperins and Bachs. It is hard for us to conceive of starting over again in a tone-system which, if applied with a rigor equal to that of our own system, would denaturalize the modern classics. Yet this choice is before us, and Partch is one of the composers who now press upon us its necessity.

*Faithful readers may expect to find my lecture, somewhat condensed, in a future copy of *The Score.* Much of its content has appeared in this column.

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Partch proceeded to rationalize a new medium of music in a scale of 43 tones to the octave (actually a double series of ratios and inserted ratios integrated as a scale), a medium of pure consonance and no dissonance, a finely melodic medium in which one can speak conversationally to pitches in the narrow intervals or chant in broader intervals. At first he adapted conventional instruments of variable pitch to play accompaniments, viola, cello, guitar, and to provide a fixed basis of exact relationships he rebuilt a reed organ, calling it Chromelodeon, extending a single octave over the greater portion of the keyboard. Then he began designing and building his own distinctive instruments, the great wooden marimbas, the magnificent kitharas with their banks of strings, the cloud chamber bowls cut from large Pyrex carboys which sound like glass bells, the harmonic canon with 44 guitar strings and movable bridges that may be adjusted to furnish the tones of his enlarged octave in any desired order or combination, and other original and adapted instruments.

The instruments are in general large, heavy, handsome, and about as transportable, to quote myself from another article, as a display of totem poles. Performance of the music is confined therefore to the current location of the instruments, which has been successively at the University of Wisconsin, at Mills College, in a 100 foot-long shed of an abandoned shipyard (Gate 5) at Sausalito, and during the last two years in a studio supplied under an annual grant from the Graduate College of the University of Illinois. *Gate 5 Records,* taking their title from the Sausalito shed, have preserved the best of the occasional performances of Partch's music. To build a duplicate set of instruments would cost, he estimates, about $250,000.

Of Partch's recorded compositions only one, *Castor and Pollux,* is without voice or stage reference. The composition defines both the elegance and the restrictions of the medium. The dynamic impulse is carried by the marimbas, the sustained instruments never winning priority, in part because of the emphatic reiteration of the beaten in contrast to the sustained tones. (Although Partch's music has been compared with that of the Indonesian gamelan, it is in every detail quite unlike.) Whether this emphasis can be effectively reversed Partch has never demonstrated. Within its somewhat narrow expressive range the music is entirely original. Music like any art grows from the esthetic habit of a period, and when it renounces such comparison it must seek another ground of commonplace. Partch seeks this through the human voice.

Thus having in mind that the intervallic pattern of his scale is fine enough to allow speaking to pitches and in broader range chanting to both melodic and eccentric pitches, one will realize that what may be lost to absolute music may be regained by applying his art to dramatic speech and to the stage. The beaten marimbas provide sharply defined, repetitively varied rhythms that may be danced. Because the music is free of conventionally sustained melodic lines, it will lack the insistence of an orchestra. It will not require its dramatic characters to be first of all vocalizing instruments, projecting themselves out of orchestral sound. The problem will be how best to use the medium.

Partch began slowly, having at that time few instruments, setting to his music such spoken, chanted, and shouted formalities as the cries of newsboys (one of his best small scores), the folkwise aphorisms of hoboes, and poems. His first attempt at a large dramatic work was called *U S Highball,* a spoken, sung, recited, chanted conversation of hoboes on a freight train going east out of San Francisco. The effect, with its rather wearying accompaniment on adapted guitar, supported by a few other adapted instruments, was topical and corny—a better term in this case than sentimental—and to my ears unpromising. A recent version of *U S Highball,* rewritten to include the full set of his later instruments, was recorded at a studio loaned by the music school of Northwestern University. It is a powerful performance, extraordinarily rich in unusual combinations of tone color, sad, perhaps still a trifle sentimental, but no longer in any way to be called "corn."

To criticize Partch's early work in comparison with the later may not be fair. The means available in the early years were limited. I do this to direct attention to more significant matters:

to the courage of a mind, that while still unable to realize its vision unhesitatingly works towards it; to the creative determination of a composer who has already in his ears sounds and combinations of sound that will exist only when the means to achieve them have been invented; to the practical intelligence of a workman who determinedly finds his way to invent the instruments he needs.

I might say here that any worker in the new electronic sound who believes himself far ahead of Partch's seemingly anachronistic medium, is quite wrong. Generations of electronic composers may be needed to accomplish a range of tones as varied, as subtly interrelated, and as firmly at the composer's command.

The break-through in Partch's long-developing enterprise occurred when he decided to set to music William Butler Yeats's translation of *King Oedipus* by Sophocles. In this original version the long stretches of formal verse, though somewhat reduced, took priority over the stage drama; it was a verse play set to music. This version was performed several times at Mills College. When permission to use the Yeats text was denied, Partch set to work to prepare his own abridged translation, tailoring the text to the music instead of the music to the text. The resulting drama, a true work for the stage, supplemented by ballet, was performed as part of the Arts Fair in a theatre constructed on the beach at Sausalito and afterwards recorded. Partch had established his own dramatic medium and idiomatic voice.

The majority of composers, though they may learn by experience to control a well-derived style, do not achieve a personal idiom within this style. Partch's problem went more deeply: he had to create a style without deriving it, since no part of such a style, except its mathematical rhythms, could be derived. He had then, within this style, to shape a recognizable language, a speech of his own, an esthetic, creative, personal idiom. I have written elsewhere that art must begin in and emerge from an achieved esthetic consistency. The style is the emerging body of the art, its form, its shape; the idiom is its recognizable individuality, its voice.

When Partch first showed me the libretto for a proposed ballet, *The Bewitched,* I was discouraged, believing that nothing could possibly come of it. I was wrong, as I am delighted to be proved wrong: in its final version *The Bewitched* surmounted all obstacles. Many parts of the score have validity and strength apart from the stage spectacle; a reduced concert suite would be desirable. Few ballet scores musically sustain their length. *The Bewitched* was performed on two different occasions, each with a separately conceived ballet. The second version had its premiere at Columbia University in New York. Opinions divide concerning which version was the better; they agree that in either version the combination of music and dance furnished an exciting drama, not easily forgotten.

With *The Bewitched* the composer became resident at the University of Illinois. He was commissioned to write for the 1961 Biennial of Contemporary Arts at the university another full-length work. He chose as the basis of his plot *The Bacchae* by Euripides.

In the Greek play, Pentheus, the young king of Thebes, tries to prevent the women of Thebes from worshipping in the Dionysiac revels. Though warned by the blind prophet Tiresias and by his grandfather Cadmus that interference with the revels will bring sorrow, Pentheus blindly insists on exerting his authority. He sends his guards to find and arrest Dionysus, who is brought bound before him. After an exchange of insults he orders that Dionysus shall be confined. Dionysus prophesies that the god will free him and that Pentheus will be brought to shame in woman's dress. Pentheus learns that his mother, Agave, is the leader of the women's revels. Dionysus, escaped, appears before him and tempts him to spy on the revels by dressing as a woman and climbing a tree to watch them. Pentheus, insecure voyeur of all he fears, becomes under the spell of the god a meek and addled transvestite. He goes to spy on the revels and is betrayed by Dionysus, whereupon his mother kills him, believing she has killed a lion, and cuts off his head. She returns proudly to the city, bearing the head. Questioned by old Cadmus she regains her sanity and sees in her hands the head of Pentheus. Such is the tragedy, gory, with a grim humor, told in ritualistic symbols ancient and long-lived as the Stone Age.

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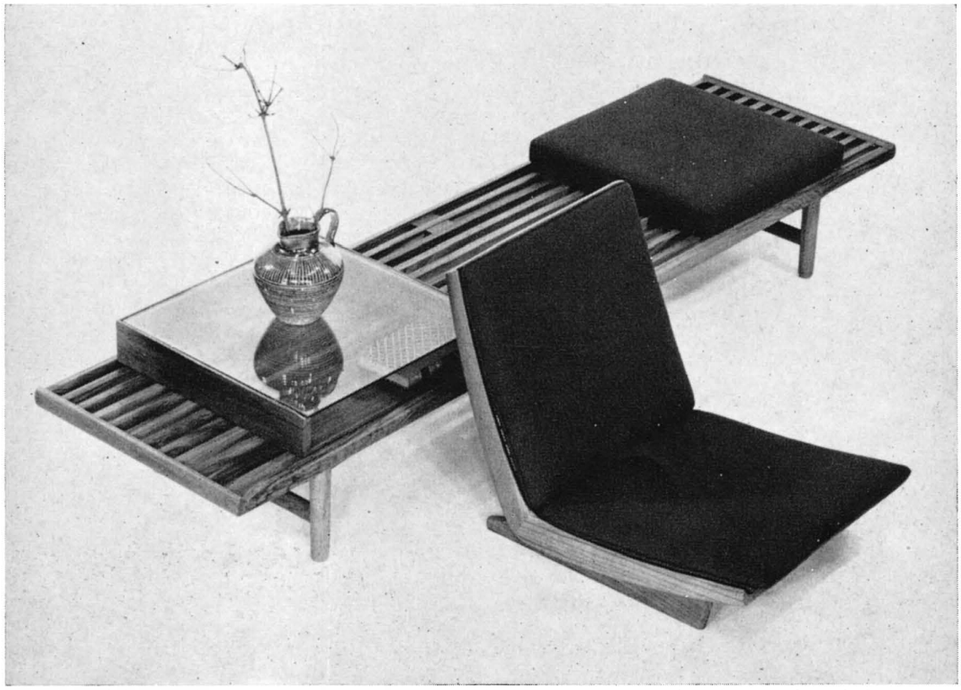

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The truth of the drama penetrates into a nightmare of the human spirit. If *King Oedipus* may be viewed, in the Freudian interpretation, as a symbol of the psychophysiological relationship between a man and his essentially unknown father, *The Bacchae* represents in the same way a symbol of the relationship between a man and his mother. Euripides may have had no more thought of this modern, symbolic interpretation than Sophocles could have had of Freud. In his *King Oedipus* libretto Partch did not alter the Sophoclean presentation. In setting *The Bacchae* he preferred the psycho-physiological interpretation.

This is not easily to be done, considering the difficulty of presenting in dramatic form the dual sexual relationship, the conception and the birth, though it is a subsidiary theme of *Hamlet*, and as some believe the most potent element of that multivalent tragedy. Shakespeare exposes the theme both in the scenes with Hamlet's mother and in the subsidiary drama of Ophelia. The fear and hatred of conception are combined with a tortured, impassioned devotion to the living mother; the sexual element of the passion is seen all around.

Partch is concerned to render the theme in Midwestern terms and to surround it with contemporary revels corresponding to the revels of the Bacchae. The consistency must be formalized and commonplace, the Greek drama retaining its stylized movement and poetic language, yet in such a way that the words and meanings are heard not in relation to a legendary Thebes but to a present-day situation. So far there is nothing that has not been before attempted, for example by Eugene O'Neill in a series of masked plays and masking plots and by Martha Graham in rhetorically obscure dance symbolization, or through such dynamically heightened, perhaps emotionally overwrought representations as the *Elektra* of Hofmannsthal-Strauss and the *Medea* of Robinson Jeffers as played by Judith Anderson. In these, however, one is offered either a modern drama with Greek implications or a Greek drama with 20th century implications. Partch chose to do both at once.

The play is divided into four choruses in modern time, each followed by a scene of the play in Thebes. The scenes carry the plot, the choruses develop the emotion. The purport of the tragedy is shown, objectified, at a Greek distance; while the meaning is made indigenous, nostalgic of our native origins. Most of the characters, including the chorus of Bacchae, are seen part of the time in modern dress and part of the time in Theban costume, although the costume changes only by the addition of masks.

When Sonny, a young, emotionally surcharged character in a blue tunic wanders into the Courthouse Park at the start of the play and for unexplained reasons climbs a tree, as the place fills up with excited adolescents greeting young Dion from Hollywood, who comes down the aisle preceded by four uniformed baton-twirlers and a uniformed brass band, one scarcely remarks that the blue tunic is probably an ice-cream vendor's short smock. The show tears into the first revel, through half-articulate choral singing, shouting, chanting, and dancing, to words as non-intellectual (non-explicatory) and emotionally elementary as "Forever Umorra" . . . "Save My Soul and Bless My Heart" . . . "Wunnantu Anda" (the dancers circling in undulating motion as if to a primitive ritual) . . . "Heavenly Daze and a Million Years" (which being Rock and Roll should do well in the nation's primitively ritualistic juke-boxes). Around in the crowd a red-smocked character, possibly escaped from behind a counter, gives no indication that he will soon step forth as ancient Cadmus. At the centre of the excitement the homecoming Dion, symbol of the juvenile, adolescent, sub-sexual ritual, contemporaneously primitive, his orange smock hanging out like a loose shirt, stalks, shouts, dances, sings, priest, animator of the revel. The scene lets down from its excitement; dancers and band recede; the blue-smocked young man climbs down from his tree. The formal play begins: Scene One. Enter blue smock wearing the mask of Pentheus, red smock under the mask of Cadmus, accompanied by the aged Tiresias. The dialogue states the plot; the play begins. A chorus of black-clad, black-masked women answers to the action, singing and dancing at the end of the scene their Hymn to Dionysus: "Holy Joy and Get Religion." Crude to the cultivated? This is true Puritan English, curtailed to the native idiom. It says exactly what it means.

Do you begin to get what I mean? Or are you like a friend of impeccable taste, who replied, shuddering, to my attempt at the above description: "The more you tell me about it, the less I think that I would want to see it." The grass-roots indigenous has always a peculiar horror for the esthete, except at a safe distance. *Carmen* was thought shocking, before it was exotic.

The dancing, I should explain, shows the influence of Martha Graham with none of the rigidity. The movements are easy, relaxed, commonplace, expressive, something between Indian ritual dancing and what the crowd does to jazz. The choral sound and action are broken up by individual outcries and passages of action. At no time is one aware that a choreographer has been pulling the design to a taut precision or a chorus master beating time. Yet, in the four performances I saw, the timing, the precise action, the effect of the outcries, seemingly so easy and haphazard, was invariable. One was aware of the stage as staged, artificial, and one could forget it. The quality desired by Bertolt Brecht, an intense interest in what is happening on the stage, instead of an identification with the characters as if they were realistic persons like ourselves, ruled the drama. With the second chorus, a solo nostalgia interrupted by broken sound, the audience entered upon unexpected, private emotions, made sharper by the quietly enacted sexual implication.

Sonny, the young man in the ice-cream vendor's smock, King Pentheus of the drama, enters unmasked. The notes say that "dream-walking," he "sees himself in a dream vision, offered up as a sacrificial victim." Actually, the young man who climbed a tree to escape and spy on the crowd sees and does not see behind him two young couples, between walking and dancing, circle down to a position indicating, without hint or violence or suggestiveness, sexual intercourse. The young man cries out; two stage figures in frilled shirts and fancy vests mildly cakewalk from the wings, circle the recumbent pairs; one of them cries, "Mother!"; the pairs rise, dust themselves—the most erotic movement of the entire action—and glide away together. From the proscenium the mask of Pentheus descends and is accepted by Sonny-Pentheus.

The Greek-native play continues. Dionysus goes to jail. The black-garbed masked chorus dance and recite "What the Majority Believes" and "Glory to the Male Womb." Do you begin to understand? If not—sorry. By now I was aware that I was

(Continued on page 28)

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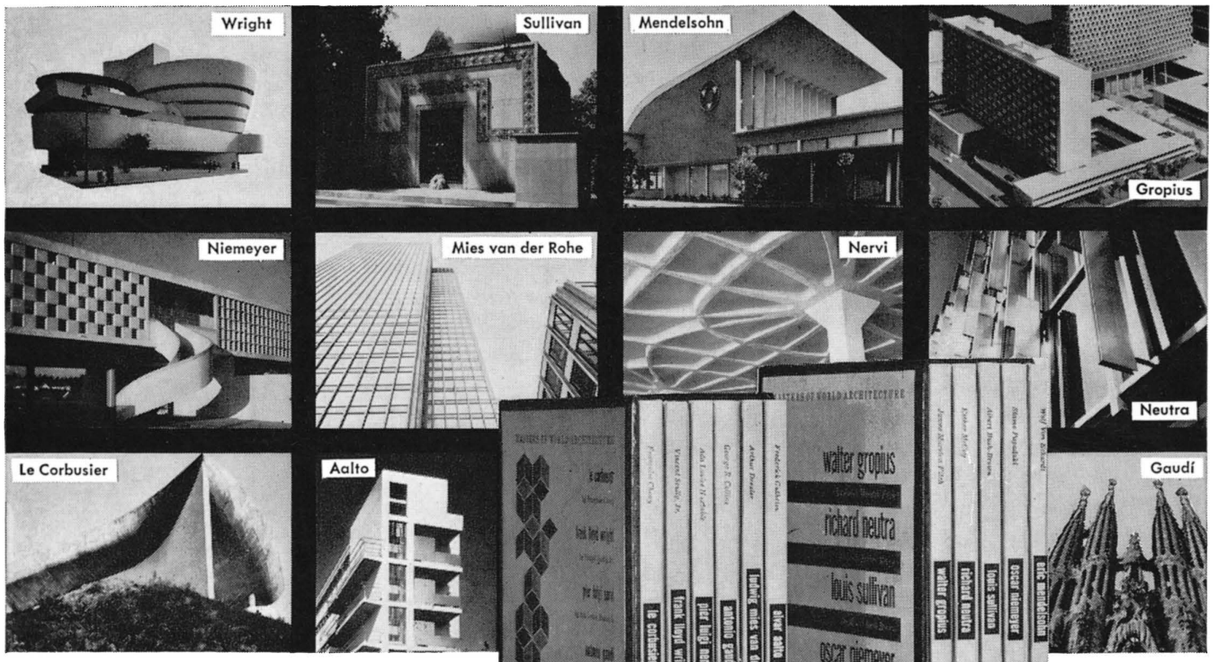

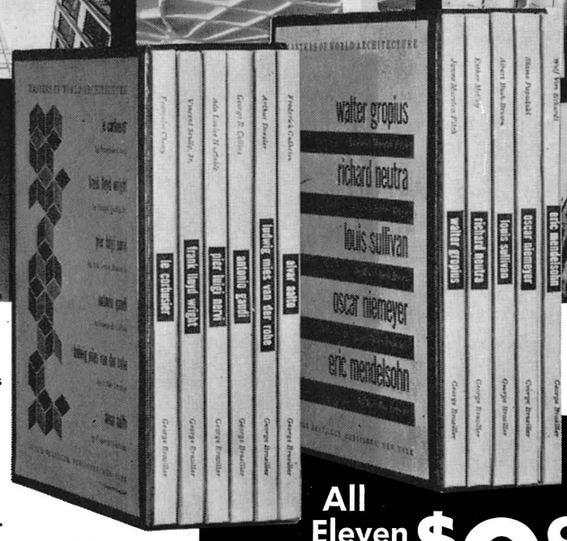

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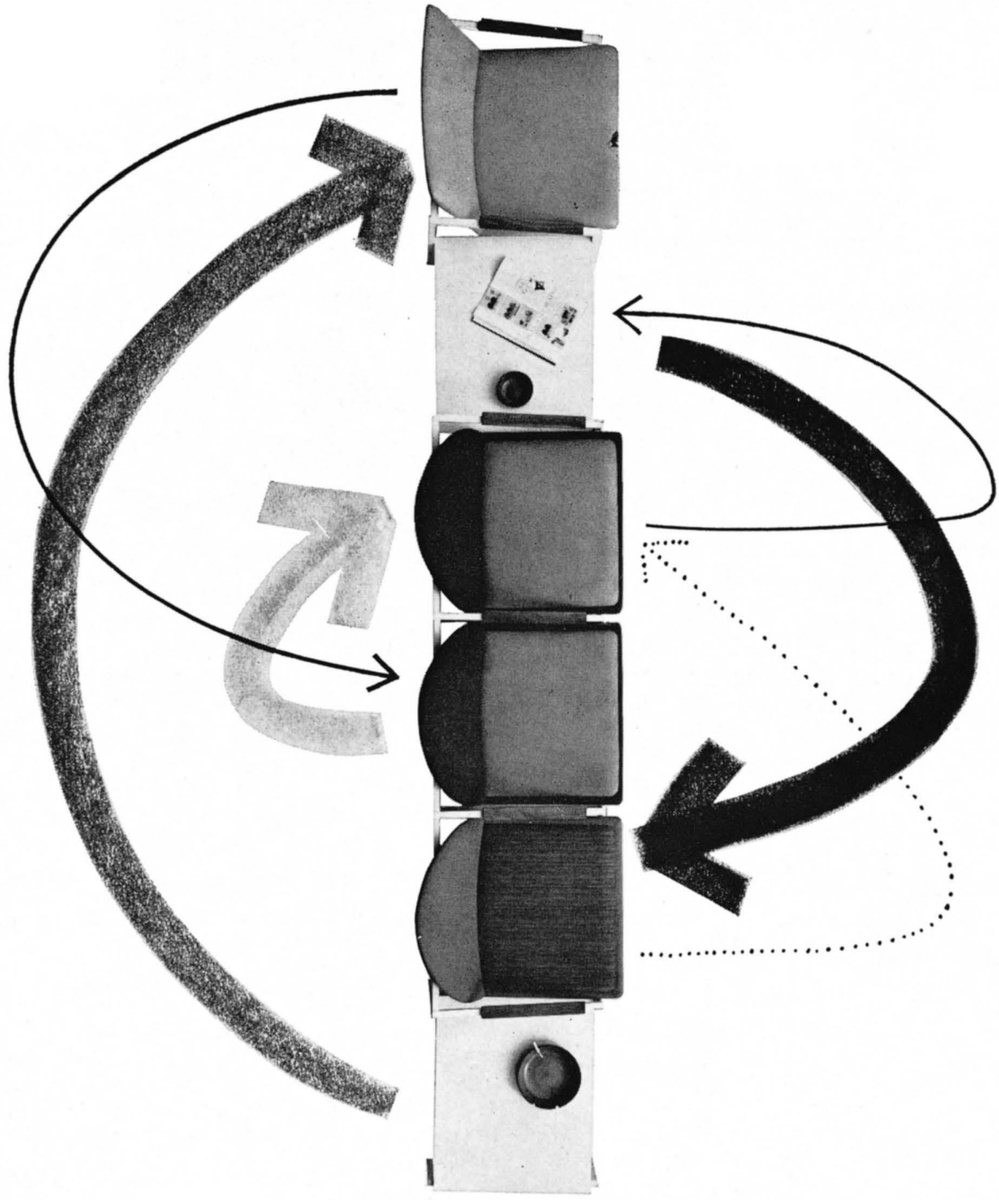

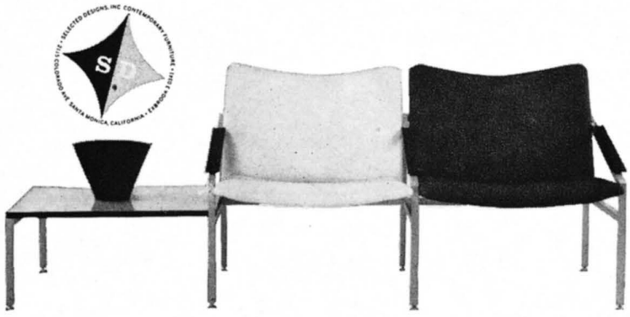

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notes

in passing

THE ARCHITECT AND THE INTELLECTUAL ASPIRATIONS OF HIS DAY

DR. JACQUES BARZUN

What do we mean when we speak of the aspirations of an age? The phrase is vague and its overtones are effeminate. Aspirations suggest wishing and sighing in the comfortable assurance that nothing can be done. This is not the mood in which great artistic movements begin. A new art means only new forms, and new forms arise from one or both of two causes: new needs and new possibilities. The two often overlap, and they are brought to the conscious mind by the sudden discovery of new attractive sensations, of unfamiliar realities, of striking paradoxical connections in daily experience.

These facts and relations, let me repeat, are first *felt*, by the men whose special sensibility and energy single them out to be the creators of new art and new thought. It is only in retrospect, when we look at the new art or new ideas, that we begin to see a pattern in the perceptions which roused the makers to do their work. The historian then puts convenient labels on bunches of similar events and declares in a self-assured voice that all the while "the age" was aspiring to do what it succeeded in doing. This is altogether right and proper. The historian's duty is to organize the past so that we may understand it.

If all this is true, then the aspirations of the twentieth century that led to modern architecture grew out of the needs and possibilities, the perceptions and sudden visions, which distinguish our century from its predecessor. What *is* new about our age? First, perhaps, the New Look of industry: in the nineteenth century the advent of the railroad and the factory meant the uglification of life. The factory was the enemy of art, and as such was fought by the best minds for eighty years. But by the turn of the century, a glimmer of light shone through the smoke and filth. It was seen that electricity and the new materials—steel and concrete—would permit industry to symbolize just the opposite of darkness. The modern factory or power plant would be shining white, clean, orderly, and even quiet. Like the machines within, it would become a model of the new beauty.

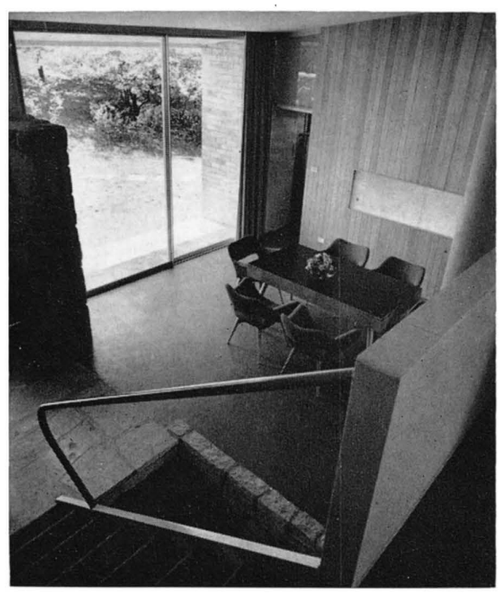
At the same time, the gas engine (prerequisite to aviation), the motion picture, and wireless telegraphy were changing men's age-old perceptions of space and time. Looking at the earth from above while traveling at 100 miles an hour, and hearing disembodied words from a loud speaker also in motion, liberated man from his semi-vegetable condition as an earthbound being, unable to move faster than a few miles an hour unless he doubled his legs by climbing a horse. In 1900 the poet and sportsman Wilfred Scawen Blunt took his first automobile ride, attaining a speed of fifteen miles an hour. He exclaims in his diary: "Certainly an exhilarating experience!" The more recent exhilaration of Major Gagarin is but a trifling intensification of Blunt's feelings and powers: the significant change came when the Wright Brothers got off the ground and speed began to affect our senses, including our sense of what is most real: It is no longer stability and weight, it is motion and weightlessness.

The new mobility had of course begun earlier, with the railroad, but it was only in the early 1900's that artists and thinkers became fully aware, first, of the psychological result and then of the social. The ever-increasing ease and frequency of motion made out of single, knowable individuals a generalized anonymous mass. For a century, population had been multiplying, but it was not numbers alone that turned men into the abstraction we call the mass society: it was the stripping away of differences through the practical need to treat everyone alike—and *en masse*—for the purpose of transportation. The large railway terminals of the nineteenth century must be thought of as the harbingers of the modern in architecture, if only because of their size and function. But the twentieth century, seeing their reason for existence, conceived a new desire, which was to express the function in new and unique forms. And soon this function of handling large crowds of anonymous beings was no longer limited to the occasions of travel by rail. It extended to all the necessities of the city—office buildings, department stores, apartment houses—the block and the superblock.

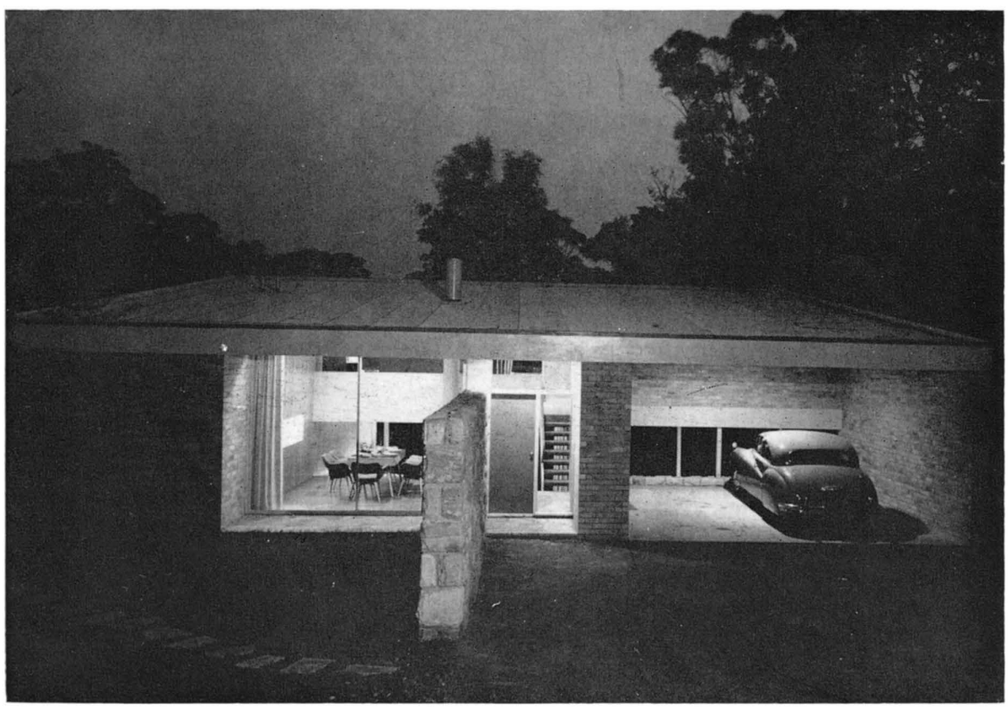
Let me interpose a word here in case the words "anonymous" and "mass" suggest to you any ideas of contempt or any supposition of inferiority. None is implied. For the word "mass" you could say: "very large numbers having identical requirements at the same time." For the word "anonymous" you could say: "uninvited, unpredictable as to age, sex, name, or private purpose." For these are the characteristics of daily urban activity which the twentieth-century architect could not help

(Continued on page 29)

From remarks by Dr. Barzun, Dean of Faculty and Provost of Columbia University, during the Columbia School of Architecture's Four Great Makers' Program, sponsored, in part, by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts.



HOUSE IN AUSTRALIA BY HARRY SEIDLER, ARCHITECT

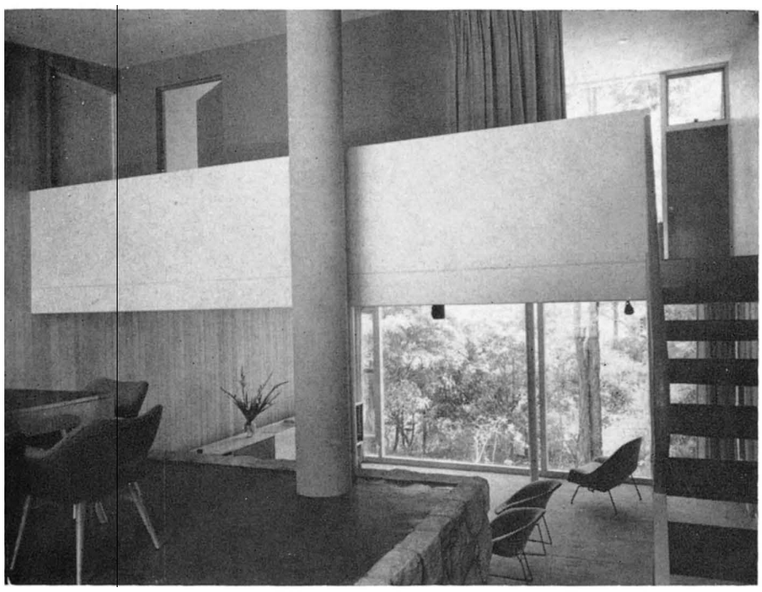


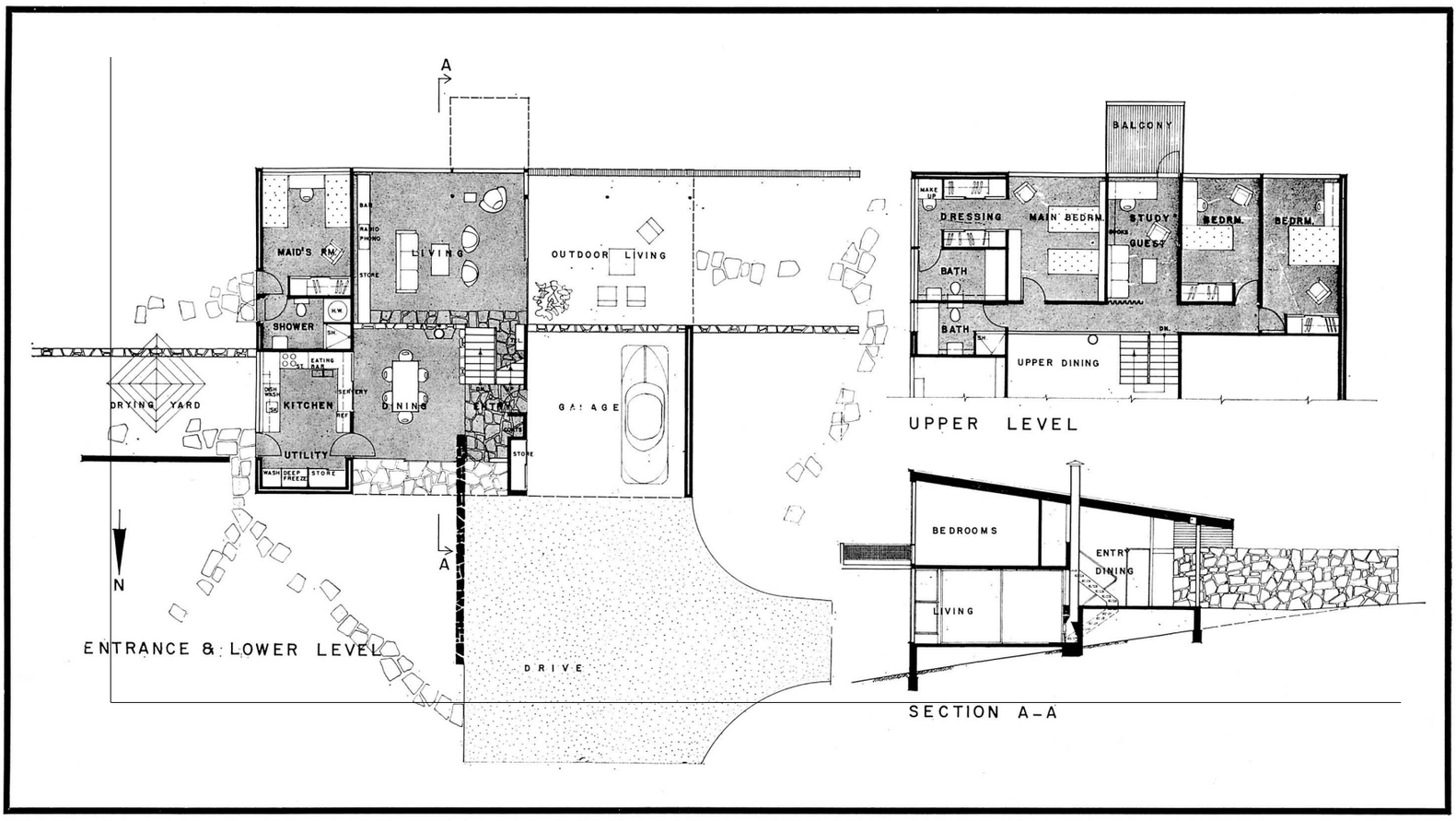
This is a house for a family with grown-up children. The slope of the ground of the three-acre property and the excellent view toward a golf course resulted in a "split level" house with living and bedrooms above each other, facing the view to the south. The intermediate entrance level accommodates the carport, dining area and kitchen. Special interplay results between the three levels, with the upper level hallway treated as an open mezzanine leading to enclosed bedrooms and the central study, guest space opening on to a cantilevered balcony. The roof is a single inclined plane covering the intermediate and upper levels, and is finished with white mineral surfaced roofing.

The house is "anchored" to the site by wall extensions, giving privacy to outdoor spaces and forming retaining walls between different levels following the general slope of the ground. These wall extensions and the recession of the covered outdoor living terrace give plastic interest to the otherwise simple shape of the building.

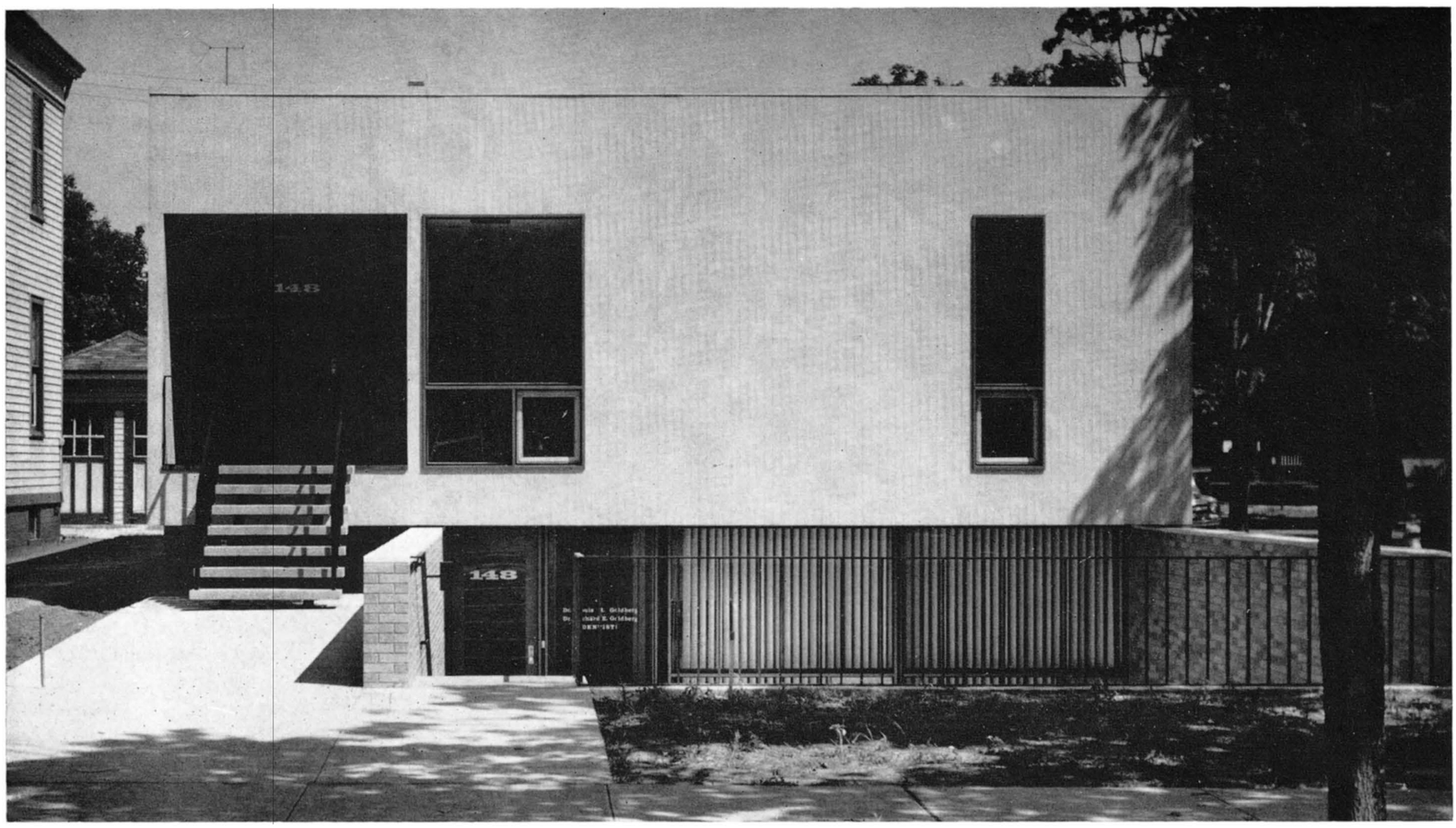
The construction is of maintenance-free materials: cream to buff colored face bricks, local random rubble sandstone walls, and reinforced concrete flat slab floors throughout. The roof is of deep timber joists.

The interior uses natural timber on the main wall of the living and dining areas. It is of ramin vertical T. and G. boarding. Floor coverings are vinyl tiles in the kitchen and dining areas, and gray wall-to-wall carpet in bedrooms and living rooms. All curtains are yellow, and primary color accents are used on doors, cushions and other small surfaces. The entire house is heated with under-floor electric radiant heating cables.





PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAX DUPAIN

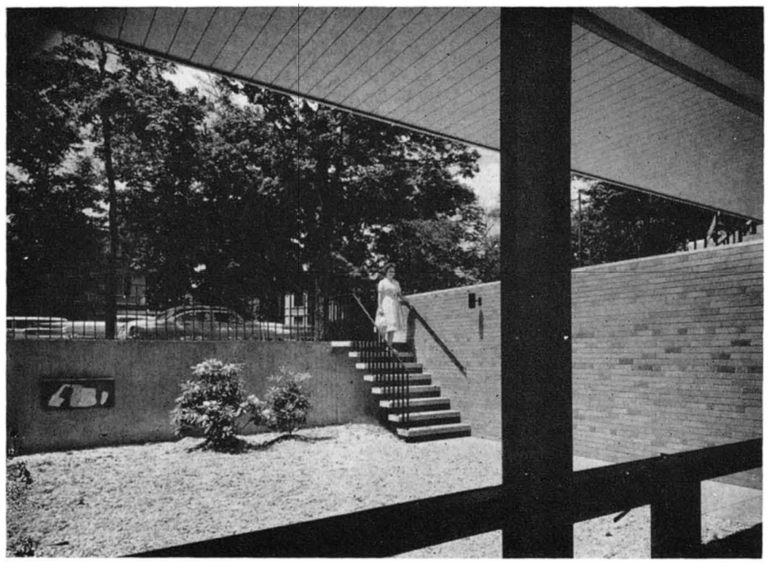


A COLLECTION OF RECENT WORK BY PETER BLAKE & JULIAN NESKI, ARCHITECTS

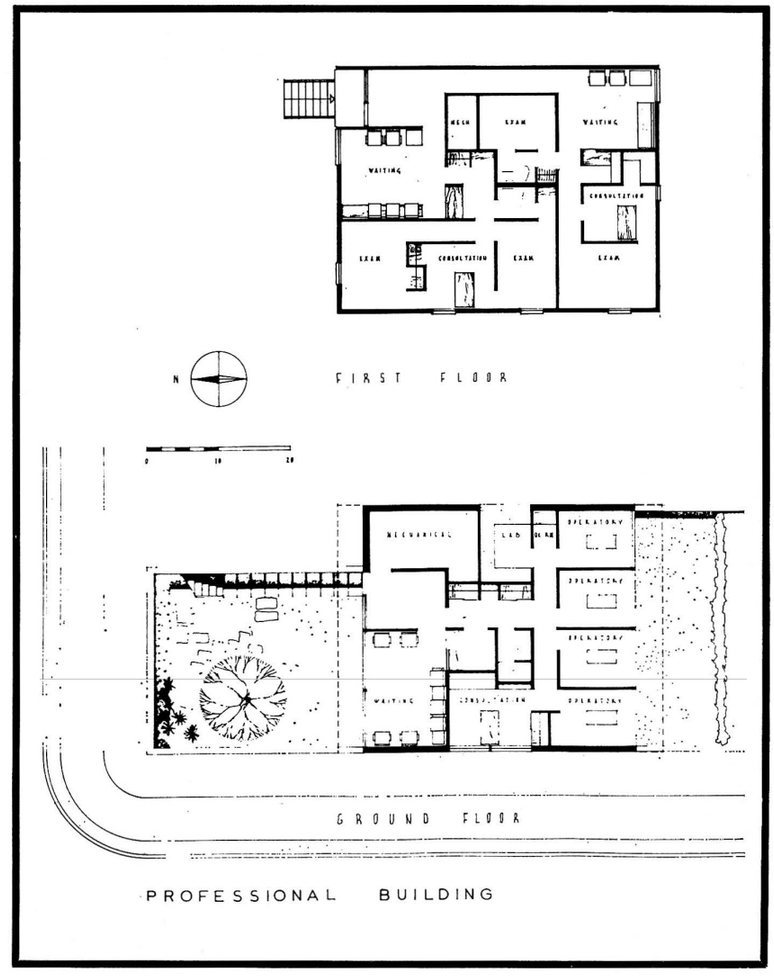
PROFESSIONAL BUILDING, NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

This small professional building in an established residential neighborhood is located on a corner. To construct the building, it was necessary to conform not only to a restrictive local code, but also to satisfy officials and neighbors on points of aesthetics.

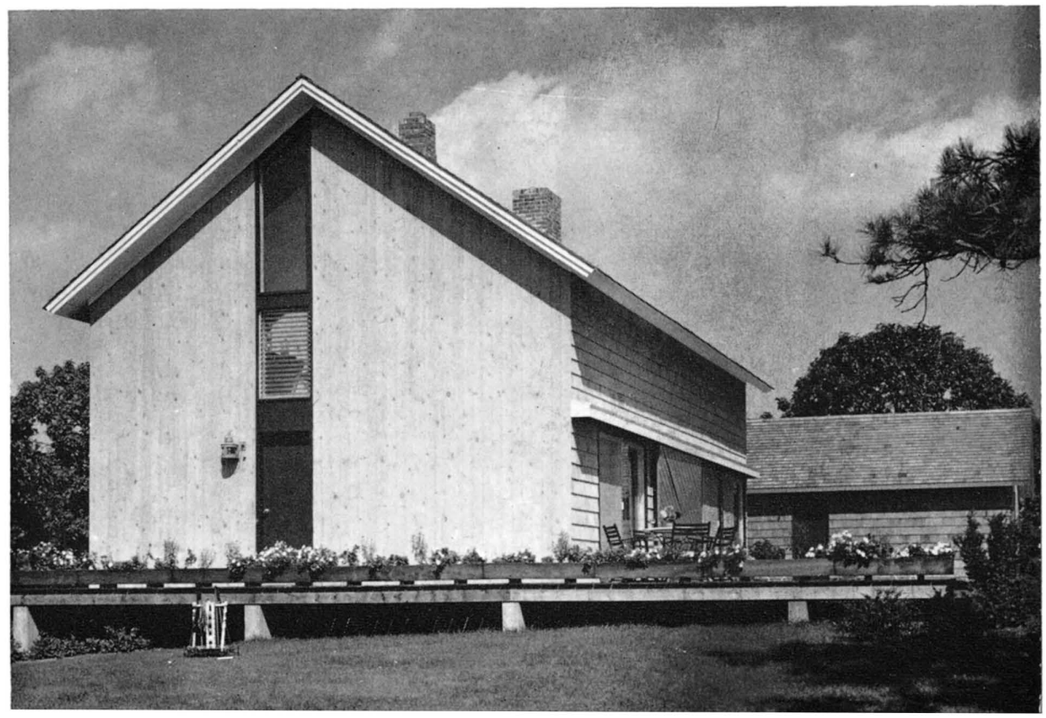
The program for the building is typical of that demanded by many groups of doctors all over the United States: to create economical headquarters for several professionals in a prominent location. The client, in this case was a dentist and the lower level was designed to house his own office. The upper floor is occupied by a physician and an attorney. The sunken front court allows for short flights of steps to both levels and keeps down the silhouette of the building.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY BEN SCHNALL



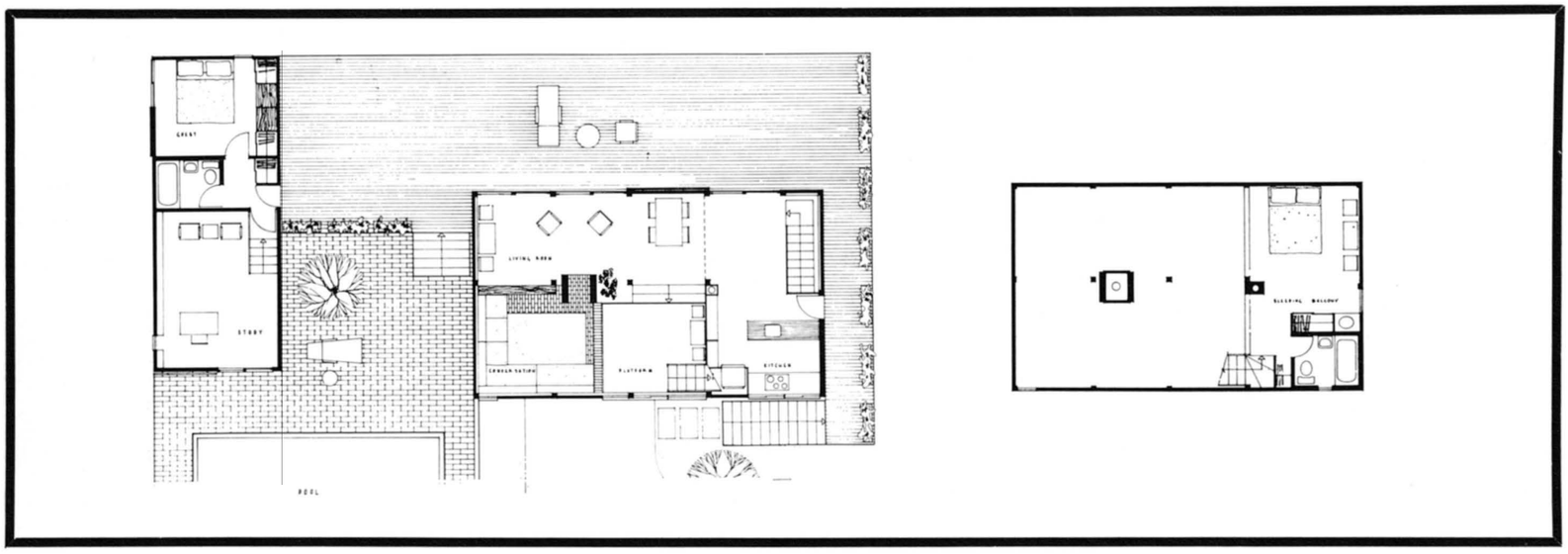
REMODELED BARN, EASTHAMPTON, LONG ISLAND

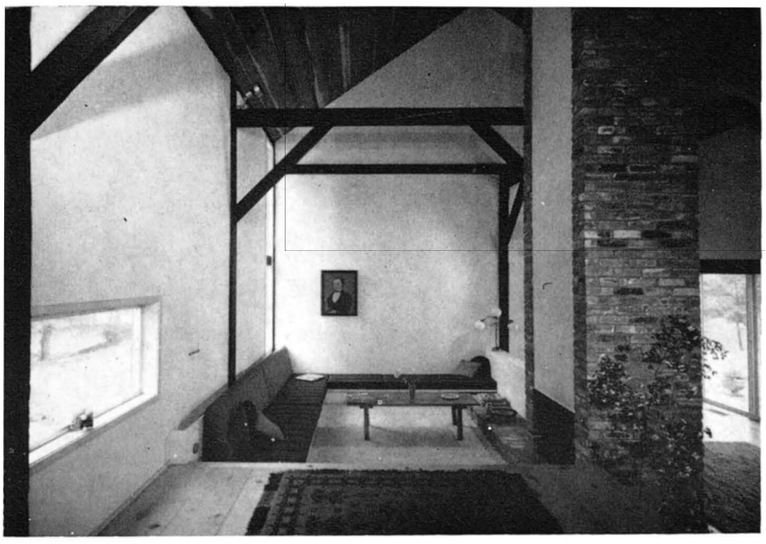


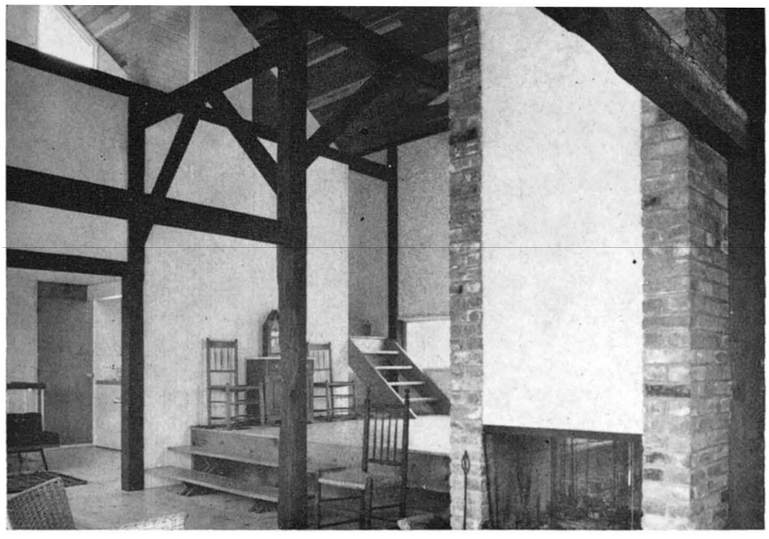
The owners bought an old barn from a farm and moved it to its present site. The post-and-beam frame of the old barn was retained and stained near-black; but the exterior was refinished, and interior finishes of plaster and wood were applied between the old posts.

The barn was turned into a main house: the interior space was kept in all essentials. At one end, a balcony was built to house the master bedroom and bath. Below this are a new kitchen and a breakfast area. The remainder of the space was divided into sitting areas, dining space, etc., by the use of platforms at different levels—all centered upon a tall fireplace chimney. A full basement was constructed under the barn, and this contains a two-car garage, workshop, utility room and toilet. Entrance to the basement is from the rear of the site, which drops off sharply.

A wide deck was constructed around three sides of the barn. This deck is contained at one end by a small, new guest-house and study, designed to match the silhouette and finishes of the remodeled barn.







PHOTOGRAPHS BY HANS NAMUTH

PHOTOGRAPH BY JULIAN NESKI

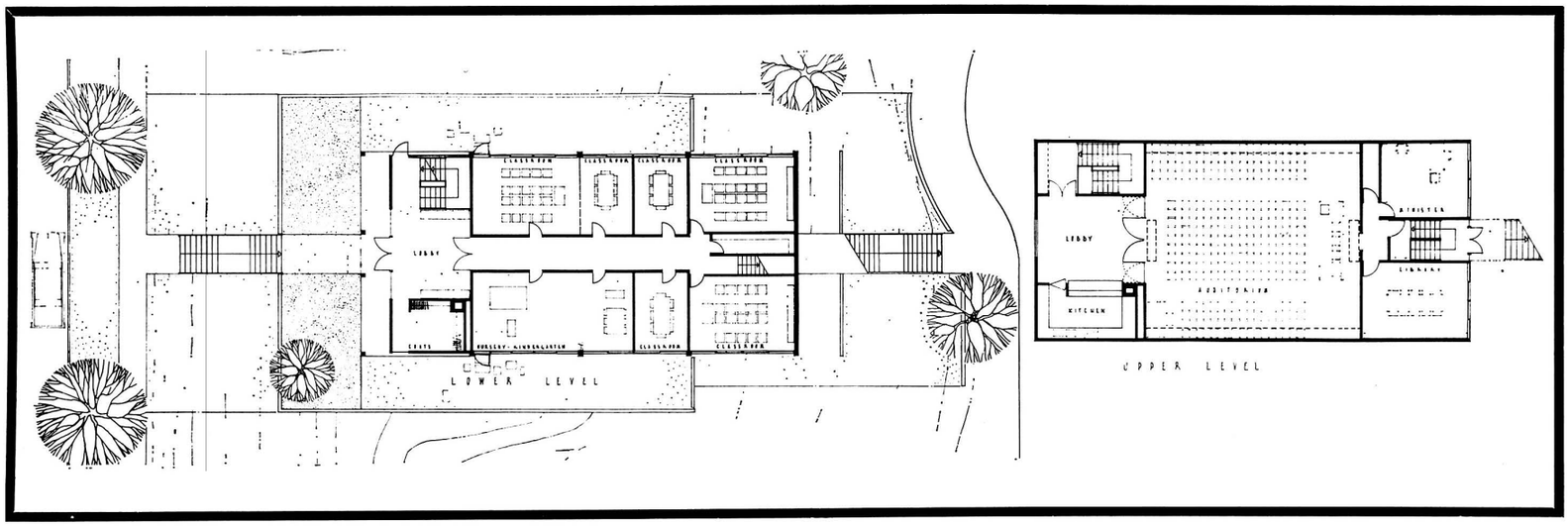
HOLLIS UNITARIAN CHURCH, HOLLIS, QUEENS, NEW YORK

On a very narrow, very steep site in an uninteresting residential neighborhood, this simple church and Sunday school attempts to create its own spirit and environment. The main approach is from below to an entrance terrace defined by retaining walls.

The recessed entrance level has the main lobby, with eight classrooms behind it, built into the hillside (and lit through high clerestory windows). From this lobby a stair leads to the main floor, which is a walled-in box, containing the actual meeting room of the church and a number of related, secondary spaces. The meeting room seats 175 and is lit entirely by skylights that send a wash of light over the white masonry walls of the interior. Thus, by very simple and extremely inexpensive means, an attempt was made to create a space that would be quiet, remote from the clutter of the street, and conducive to meditation.

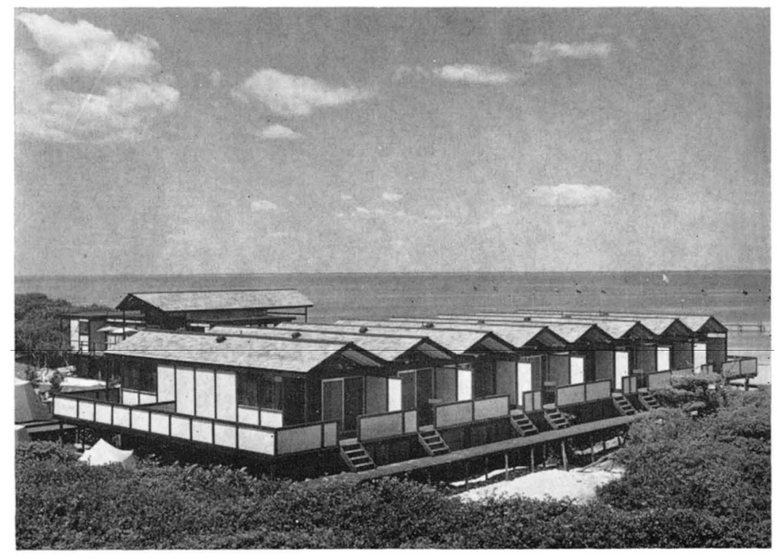
The frame of the building is fireproofed steel, the fireproofing concrete being painted a dark gray. Panels of fine, speckled, gray face-brick were set between the columns. The interiors are concrete block painted white. The roof is of open-web steel joists topped by wood planking. The ceilings, too, are painted white.

A secondary entrance to the church is from a small street on the uphill side of the property.



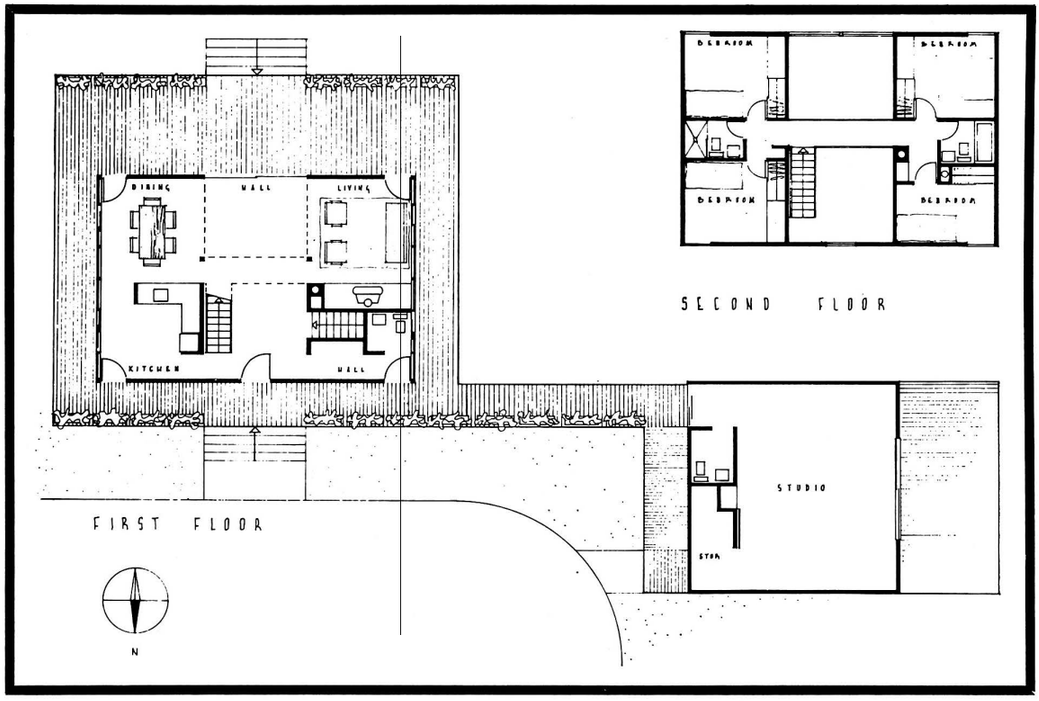
TALISMAN ISLAND SUMMER COLONY, FIRE ISLAND, NEW YORK

The character of this development was established in its essentials by a few isolated cottages before the architects were called in to design the apartments shown here, and to propose a master plan. The construction is extremely simple and in keeping with the cabana quality of seaside living. This is not meant to be "serious" architecture—it is, quite simply, architecture for fun.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY FREDERICK J. MILLER

HOUSE AND STUDIO, SAGAPONACK, LONG ISLAND

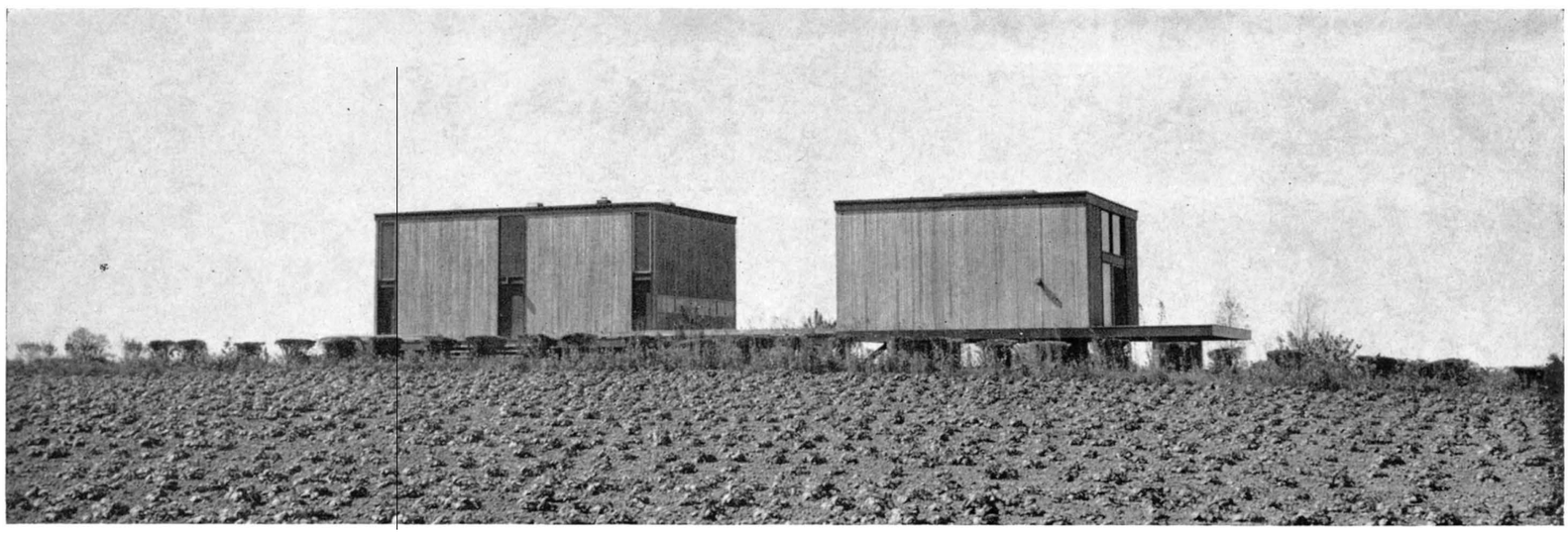


These buildings are located on a slight rise overlooking a long pond that extends all the way to the lines of the dunes. The ocean is visible just beyond.

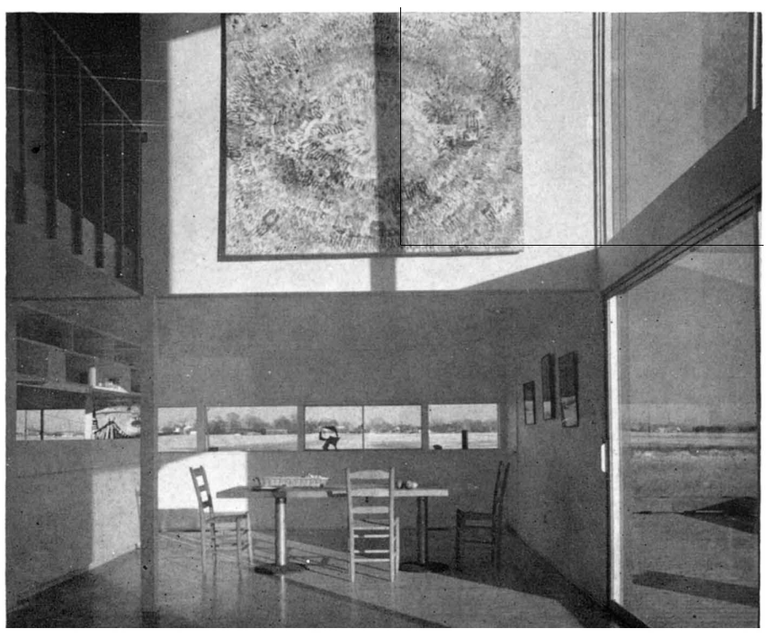
The main house is a symmetrical two-story-high block with a high central hall. On each side of this hall are secondary spaces: at the lower level there are the kitchen and dining room on one side, and an intimate living area on the other; at the upper level there are two bedrooms and a bath on each side, connected by a bridge. A full basement with garage is under the house.

A system of decks surrounds the main house and joins it to the studio, which faces another part of the pond. The details of the studio match those of the house.

The owner is a painter and art critic, with a large collection of abstract-expressionist paintings. Some of these are shown on the walls of the central hall.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY HANS NAMUTH AND PETER BLAKE



GYORGY KEPES

NOTES ON EXPRESSION AND COMMUNICATION IN THE CITYSCAPE

Our society exhibits, in addition to a small body of explicit symbols—the signs or tags, verbally or otherwise coded, orientationally or otherwise directed, with unequivocal messages delivered by visual means—a vast body of implicit symbols of all kinds. Just as the way in which we respond to our environment gives shape to our social structures and our arts, our social structures and our arts provide mute testimony of the quality of our responses to our environment. This is testimony that we can read—with all shades of clarity and depth of understanding, in proportion to our own aptness of response to the objects and events that we encounter.

At its simplest level, the *implicit symbol* that provides this mute testimony is almost indistinguishable from the explicit sign—for example, the initialed sweater that proclaims the officially accredited college athlete. Such sweaters and such initials, our society agrees, are the conventional indexes by which we are to recognize men who have distinguished themselves in physical sport. Similarly, the Phi Beta Kappa key proclaims socially recognized mental attainment.

There are other indexes that, if less official, are equally socially generated. Juvenile delinquents have their uniforms of horsehide jackets, belt buckle, blue jeans, and boots; beatniks are bearded; undergraduates wear crew cuts, soft-tailored tweed jackets, and slim trousers. We absorb these conventions as part of our acculturation. In a different context of visual meaning, trained archeologists, through the internal evidence of style in historically evolved forms, can determine within a decade or two the date of a piece of statuary or a carved bit of tracery. No matter how modern the guise, a church is recognized by everyone as a church, because of the persistence of familiar trends that go as far back as the era of Constantine. And we recognize a bank as a bank even more easily now than we did when banks wore the outer trappings of Greek temples; the inner array of counters, tables, giant vault door, and desk is still the same, although purified into more elemental shapes and colors, and the vast expanse of glass now permits us to see this inner structure directly from the sidewalk or the road.

Our immediate experiences trigger our memories, releasing the cognate images from our stored experience into the temporary focus of awareness and establishing a relation between our present and our past. This is obviously true of our personal, individual, uncommunicated experience, but it is also true of the stored-up experience that we share with other persons of our condition—our profession, our town, our income bracket, our political party, our religion, our nation, our century. Some images are common images, some symbols, common symbols. Without common symbols, men could not have evolved very far above the animal level; but with them men have gone in a mere five or six thousand years from simple to ever more complex social levels. The socialization, or standardization, of such spatial divisions as the length of the human foot or the thickness of the human thumb or the weight of a stone became unit spatial measurements, unit weight measurements, or unit monetary measurement according to the selected index, or symbolic connective characteristic, thus establishing the social basis of technology and science.

Foci of common life—the family home, the community church or school—command the individual and collective respect of the group involved. They symbolize common life as well as house it. In giving concrete shape to our awareness, such symbols give rise to expressive, manifestly significant forms, molding and creating our arts and rituals. Monumental — self-consciously impressive — architecture arose many thousands of years ago out of the need felt to call attention to the place where men met to deal with their important common problems. From Stonehenge to the Athenian Agora, from the Forum Romanum to the United Nations building, the place of assembly has formed and been formed by the power of impressive design. The forms have varied according to need and according to the different type of cooperative activity considered necessary to group survival. Over the centuries, of course, the radius of group involvement has increased. The different scales of a New England common and Rockefeller Plaza indicate changing concepts of human cooperation; but, whatever the range of

interest that these urban forms may express, there can be no doubt that they perform a symbolic function. They are symbols of a common perceptual reality, and, as such, belong to a common symbolic world. Without the images of this world, the growth of the urban environment could not be guided or controlled.

In the visual field, particularly in the successive images that we perceive in our environment, the juxtaposition of images offers the most potent symbolic qualities. The contrast of the towering cathedral with the cluster of small dwellings in a medieval city had a symbolic quality. In some of the great cities of the Near East, the bleak, undifferentiated long span of the desert, offset by the flamboyant richness of the clustered buildings, created a perceptual tension with great symbol-evoking power. In our cities, the juxtaposition of very large with very small buildings, of busy with tranquil areas, are more than simple expressions of variety. Contemporary urban dwellers living in a restrained, almost inhuman setting usually welcome every sign of the natural world that can be introduced. Central Park is more than a pleasant means for escaping the busyness of the city; in its juxtaposition with a surrounding frame of high buildings it is a symbol of the richness and strength of metropolitan existence. It is self-evident that the architect or planner cannot consciously create this grand scale of poetry with such symbolic juxtapositions; but, on the other hand, awareness of the power and meaning of contrasting forms is necessary if we are to guide the shaping of a rich poetic city. In the intricate and numerous visual-sequence relationships that the city offers its population, meanings are conveyed in accordance with the structure of the sequence path that we follow.

We read the personality of a man through observing the sequence of his expressions and actions. We read the character of the cityscape in the same way. A single-cell organism is immediately dependent on its environment, and has no means of controlling it. Only when cells grow into complex masses do they develop a fixed internal organization capable of protecting them from change or disturbance in the external environment. In this complex stage there is a division of labor, with the functioning of specific organs coordinated. In a complex social state, a similar structuring develops. Under primitive conditions, individuals are free to move. In the complex production processes of our civilization, the division of labor and the physical stability of the work place bring about a relative fixation of the individual in the group. His mobility is a highly limited one. From home to work, from work to home, from home to shopping, the individual follows a defined path at a specified time. Each path of travel offers its characteristic challenge. The basic unit of our urban vision, accordingly, is not the fixed spatial location but the transportation-defined pattern of a sequence of vistas.

Let us compare the succession of impressions from opposite directions in a sequence experience. A commuter usually takes the same route in entering and leaving the city, but the elements of the sequence experience are in reverse order. Entering, he sees calm, well-groomed suburbia; then the industrial outskirts; then the belt of slums; then the heavy traffic and kaleidoscopic variety of the business area. In the sequence each shift of vista conveys meaning. The jump from the tidy, pastoral quality of the suburban area to the garbage dumps and smoke rings of the industrial outskirts inevitably gives rise to some feeling in the perceptive traveler. Going home, he finds similarly that the sequence of scenes from the power-suggestive industrial plants to the inhuman substandard dwellings of the industrial slums is charged with larger meanings. The same form elements, in reverse order, evoke different responses. The succession of distances and the strength of the impacts are compositional elements of symbolic significance.

It is evident that without a major restructuring of the environment this chain of images cannot be modulated. But an analysis of their impacts can bring significant understanding and, possibly, tools for shaping and controlling parts of the environment. An awareness of the qualities of meaning evoked in the spectator by certain sequence relations of morphological elements would help him to develop the sensitivity necessary for forming sound judgments. There is a potential new keyboard of creative formation that can be understood with the aid of technical tools, such as motion pictures, and it may be used with increasing scope. A careful survey of the relationships of form elements in succession is the necessary beginning. Sequential relations of open and closed space, high and low buildings, rich or simple surfaces, natural features and man-created forms, and the many other variables, can be studied, recorded, and manipulated in order to gain some feeling for the expressive qualities inherent in the juxtaposed features in the sequence chain. Regular and irregular changes, rhythmical or contrapuntal sequences of different space distances, have to be recorded and interpreted. The range is too vast to be brought down to experimental testing, but there are means for helping us to understand these processes.

Because of the enlarged scale and increased complexity of the metropolitan environment, one central core as an expression of civic connectedness is insufficient for all purposes. There is an increasing need to express in symbolic form not one cooperative act, but the interrelatedness of the whole urban field. Architectural history suggests a procedure common to all cultures: the emphasizing of structurally important elements. To reveal the cooperative functions of the separate structural members, master builders and architects have accented the primary weight-carrying members, especially at the critical points of their function. There is a similar possibility in the broader scale of city structure. Dominant functional areas that reveal significant cooperative effort can also be articulated by decorative means appropriate to the scale and dimensions of the city. In our present cityscape the various areas are undefined. The basic characteristic of our present life is interdependence, but the molding expressive symbols of this interdependence are still missing.

The exploded space of the metropolis in which effective distance depends upon the mode of travel and in which vast areas and populations become linked in a single urban fabric makes the unit building or unit area a less important symbol than in the past. We must find contemporary substitutes and expressive symbols of these new dynamic dimensions. This is especially difficult when the parts of the city are unclear; often today, when one drives in from a suburban residential area to the working center of a city, the sequence of scenes is chaotic, its connecting links are lost, and its symbolic significance is stillborn. What is actually expressed is chaotic, haphazard growth. But the city's parts can be made clear, and a restudy of the sequence of vistas in expressive continuities can offer new symbols. Sharp accents signifying character changes between two areas give legibility and underline the structural logic of the total urban scene. The heights of buildings, open or closed spaces, changing color schemes, or the alternation of intense, vibrating shopping areas and disciplined public squares can express meaning in and through their connections.

A new art form of our century is the collage, a device by which materials from the most heterogeneous fields are brought into a contrasting but complementing ensemble. The cityscape is to some degree a counterpart of the collage, in which the contrast and variety of the elements produces a vitality through tension and potential of structure. Through the cooperation of architects, designers, painters, and sculptors skilled in the expressive nature of forms, a wealth of new architectural devices, color, and textural values can be brought into play. We must learn to make every building expressive, not just by its material and structural principles, but by the nature of the life it serves. Secure on this level of small units, the next step would be to group the buildings where the spatial relations with each other and with the ground could form a broader scale of differentiation by means of a common spirit. The individuality of a building should cooperate with the expressive form of a group of buildings. This expressive articulation of the cityscape can be expanded to include districts, areas, and sections. By defining characteristic features, the variety that exists latently can be made manifest. Redirecting interest toward differentiation would inevitably bring qualities of visual distinction to the fore.

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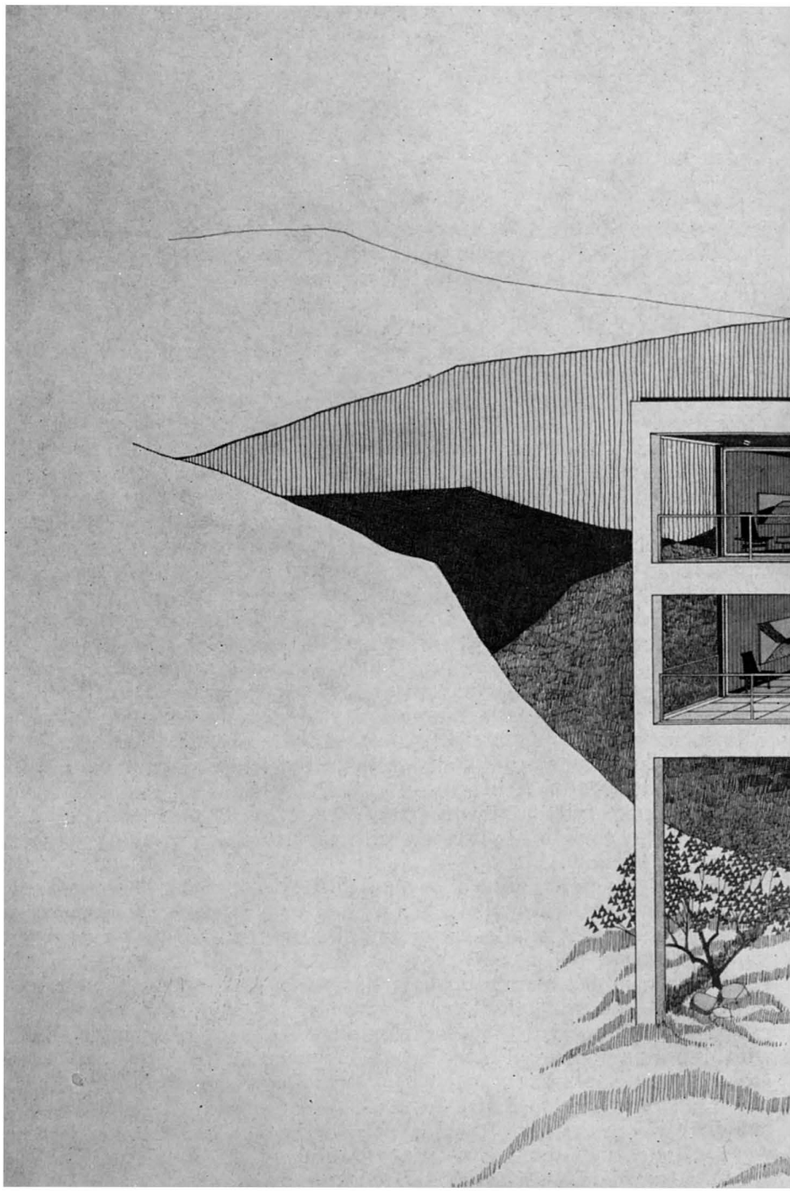
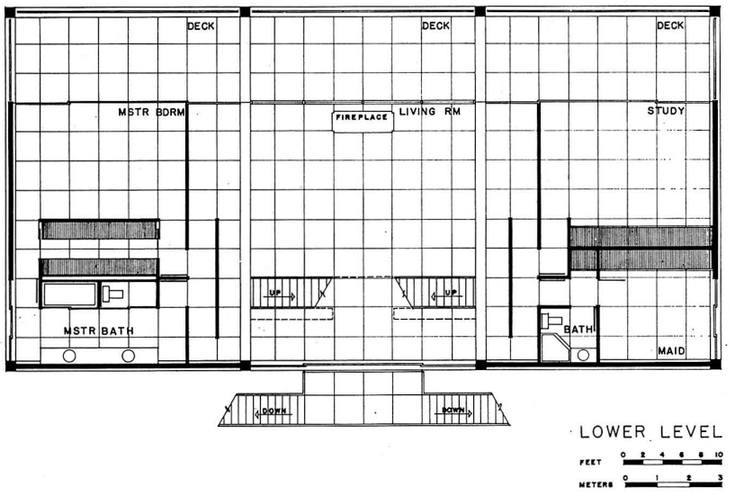
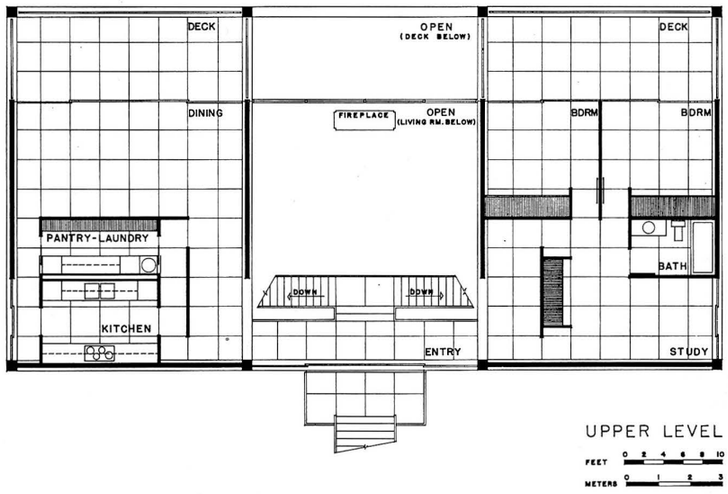


HOUSE BY CRAIG ELLWOOD ASSOCIATES

J. E. LOMAX, ASSOCIATE
MACKINTOSH & MACKINTOSH, STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS



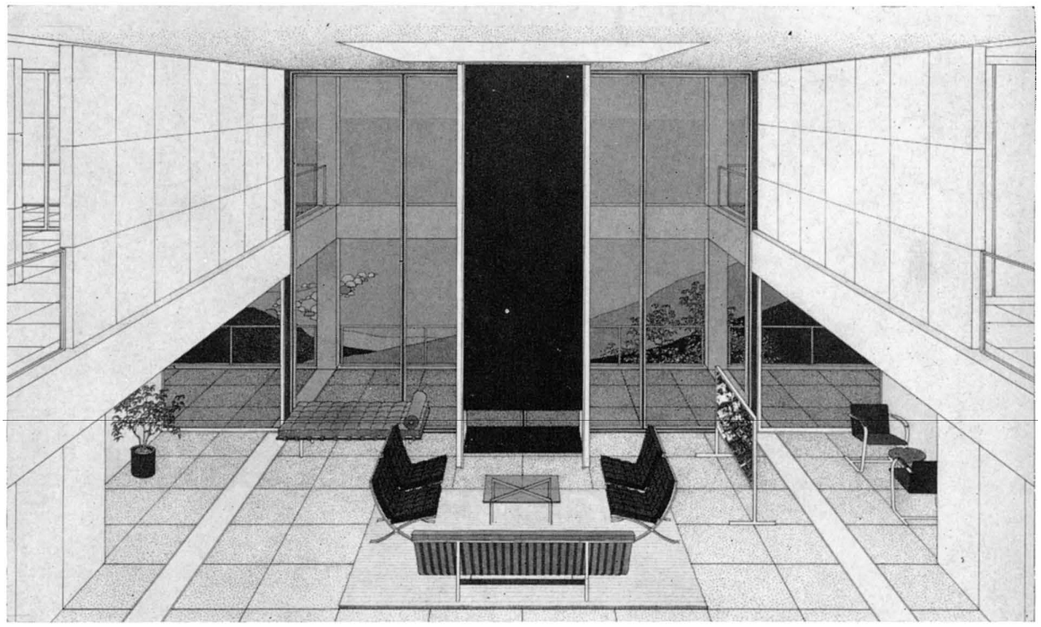


This house overlooking the sea is to be constructed on a deep site, 650 feet from the frontage on the Pacific Coast Highway to the mean tide line. The house is to be located 150 feet from the water and approximately 100 feet above the beach, at the edge of the level portion of the site where the land begins to slope quickly and roughly to the beach below. The house is designed for a young family of four. Their requirements included a two-story structure and the use of materials best suited for salt-air corrosion resistance.

The modular frame is to be poured-in-place, reinforced concrete with poured-in-place concrete slab floors and roof.

The present design shows the entry as a mezzanine within the two-story height living room. The second story entry is bridged to the level land behind it and, from the entry, one looks down through the living area, its glass walls and deck, to the rocky beach and the islands across the channel.

Wall panel construction is not finalized, but pre-cast concrete and pre-cast plaster-stucco are being investigated; terrazzo floors and plastered ceilings are being considered.



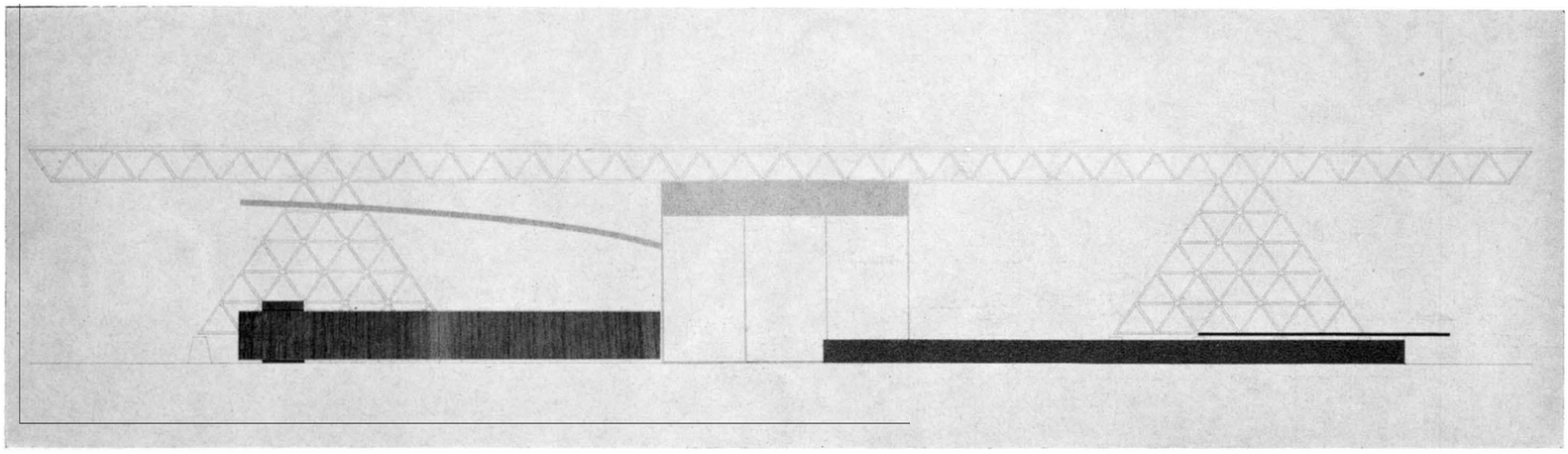
DETAIL VIEW OF SPACE FRAME STRUCTURE SHOWING THE TETRAHEDRAL SUPPORT AND ITS RELATION TO THE ROOF

A CULTURAL CENTER

ARCHITECTURAL PROJECT BY REGINALD F. MALCOLMSON

FELLOW, GRAHAM FOUNDATION FOR ADVANCED STUDIES IN THE FINE ARTS—1961

LONG ELEVATION



INTERIOR VIEW SHOWING AUDITORIUM WITH SUSPENDED ACOUSTICAL CEILING AND CORE FOR STORAGE, TOILETS AND MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT

This project was undertaken with the collaboration of graduate students of the Department of Architecture and City Planning at Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago.

The dimensions of the hall are 504 x 378 feet overall and the roof rests on four supports at 300-foot intervals in both directions.

The nature of space frame structures is such that the rigidity of the system depends on a cellular geometry, the basis of which is the tetrahedron.

The horizontal roof plane of space frame cells is supported by four tetrahedra composed themselves of many basic cellular units, each support being carried on concrete piers.

The elevations show the characteristic difference between the two aspects of the tetrahedral supports when seen in front and side elevation.

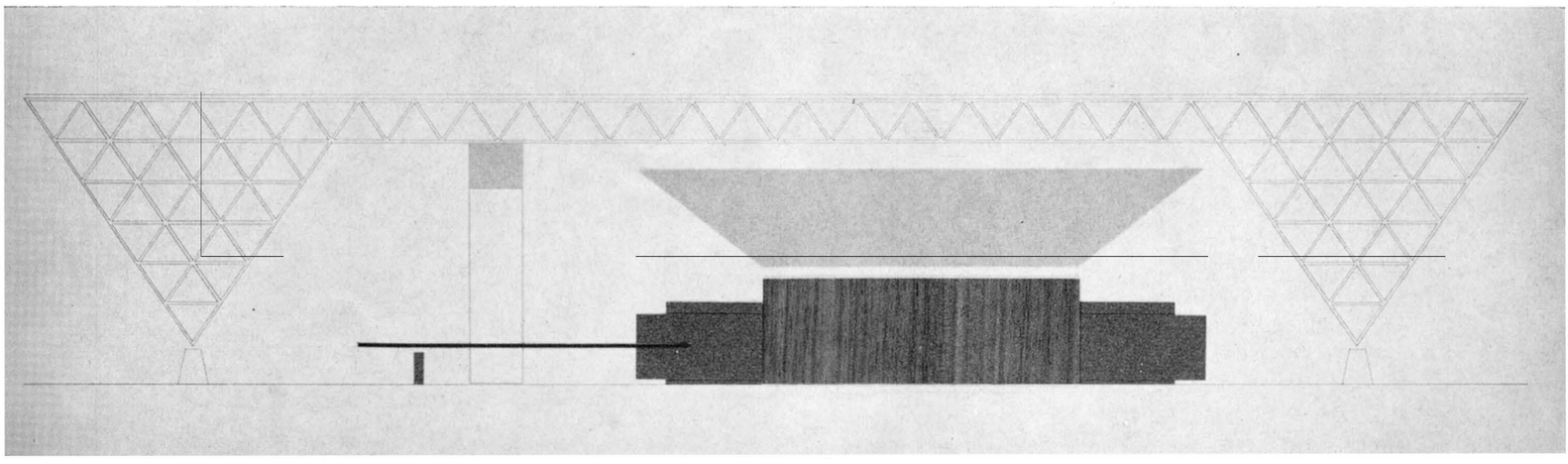
The space frame members are of tubular sections with spherical metal connectors having metal sleeves which are welded to the members.

It was considered essential to the problem that the supports should be developed from the space frame system both from the point of view of structural integrity and visual clarity.

In such a large hall the elements of the interior are the auditorium, the core containing mechanical equipment and the mezzanine for sculpture displays and free-standing walls for display of paintings and prints.

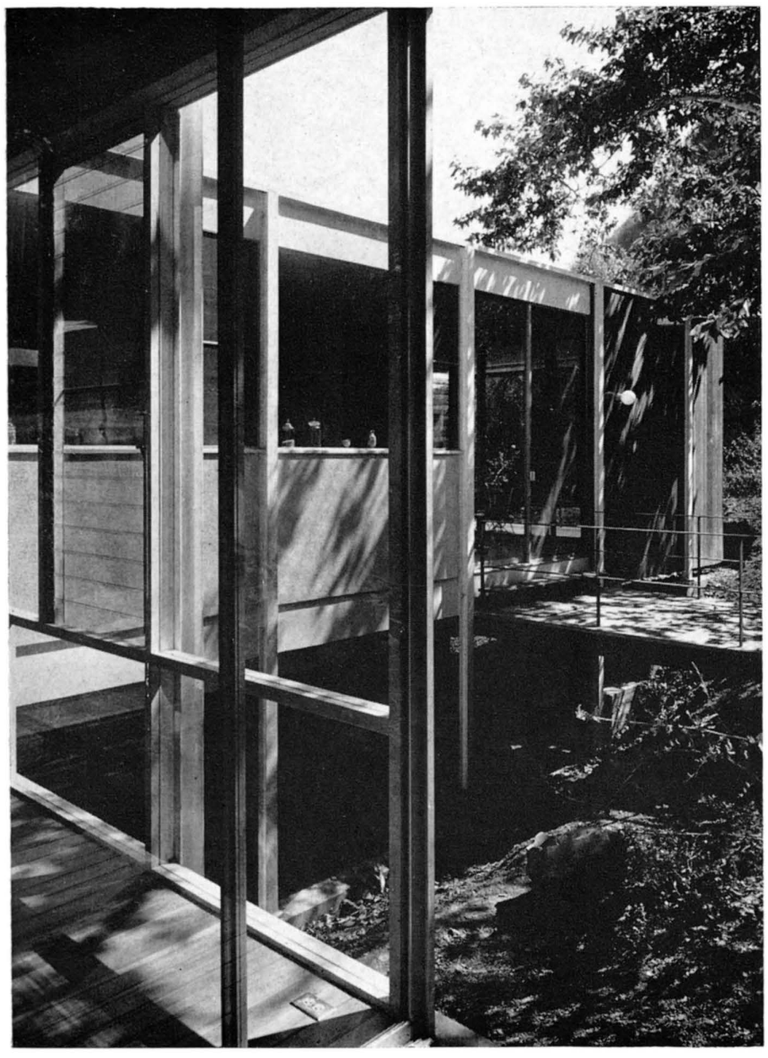
With the exception of the core all other elements can be freely disposed since the space frame system and its curtain wall has established a structural envelope within which architectural space relationships can be developed.

SIDE ELEVATION



HILLSIDE HOUSE BY BERNARD ZIMMERMAN, ARCHITECT

ROBERT MARKS, STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

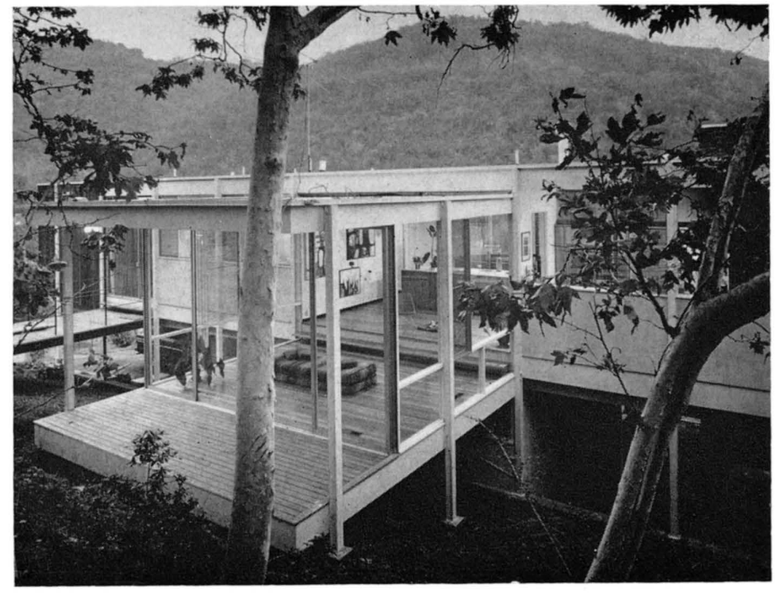


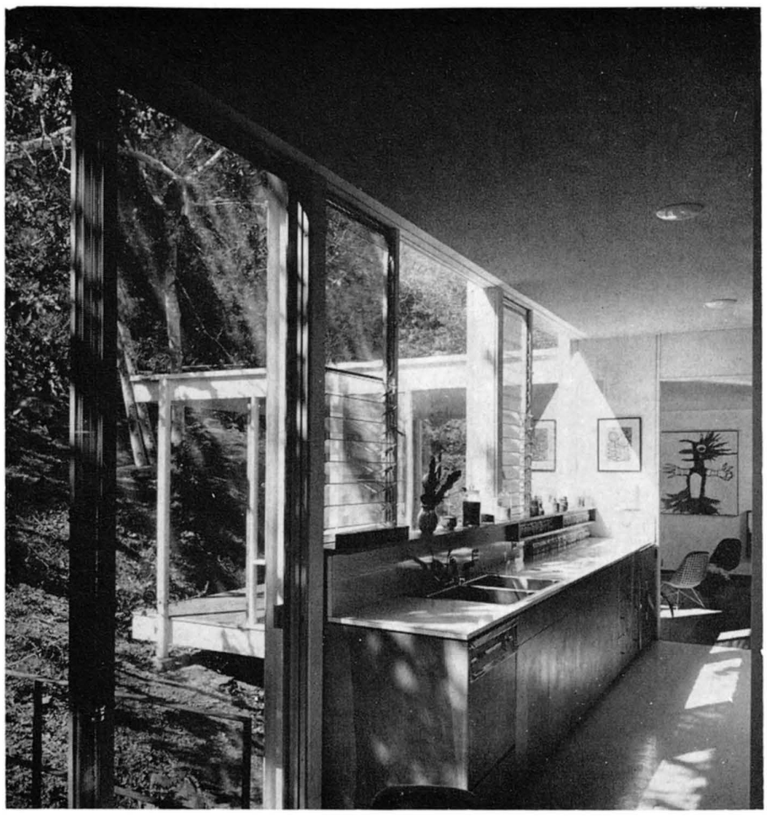
This house, on a 3½-acre hillside site in Los Angeles, was built for a couple with three children. One of the clients' requirements was a design that would permit gradual expansion but not make the house appear as though it were partially completed. The result was a three-level cruciform house of 2300 square feet with 1600 square feet of open deck and a potential expansion area of another 2300 square feet of deck space.

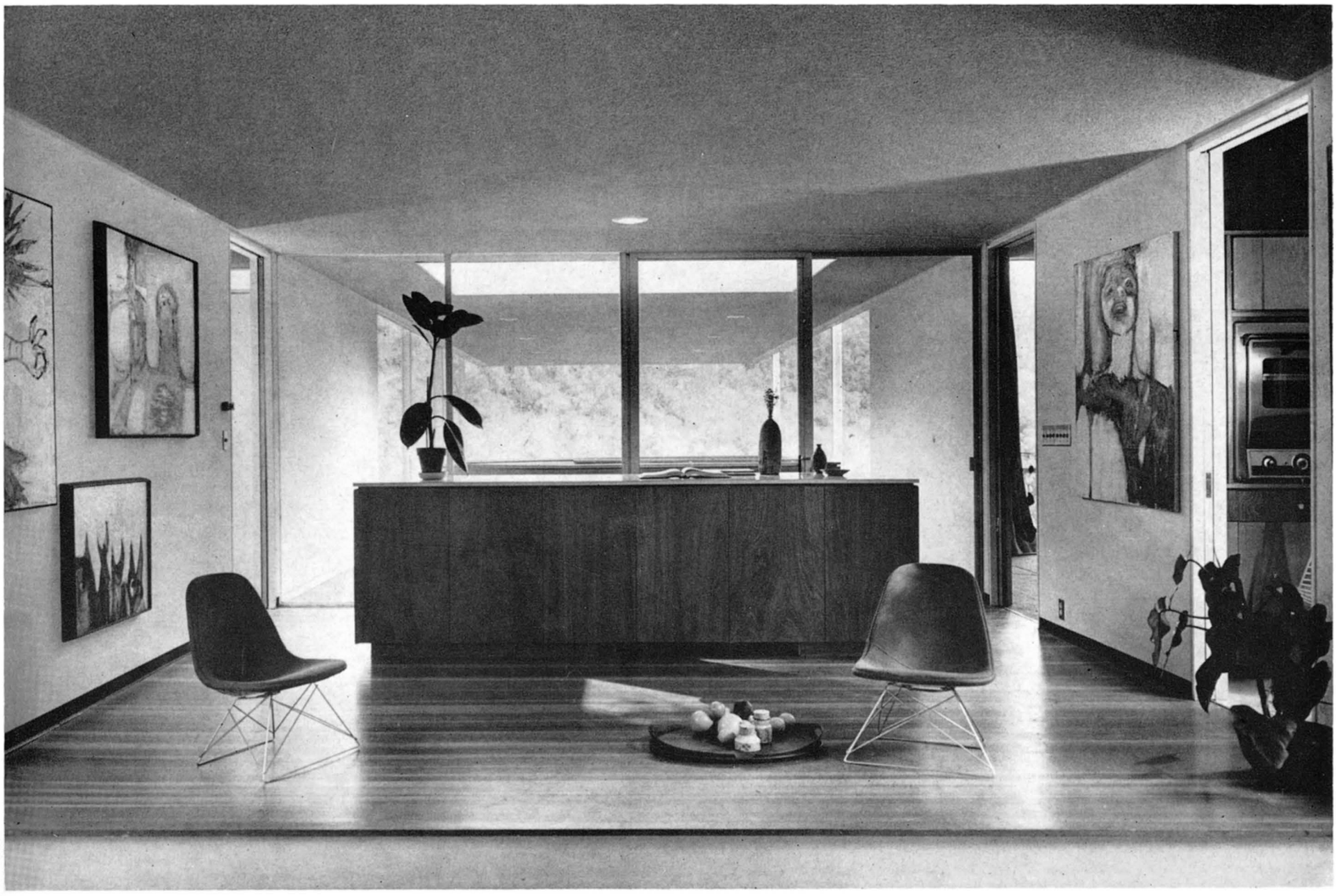
At present, only the upper level of the bar of the cross, which faces onto the flatest area of the uphill slope, is used for living purposes. This area contains the living and dining room, kitchen, eating area, activity room, three rooms and two baths. The other two levels are used for storage, laundry and a carport.

The stem of the cross, which reaches onto the down slope, is used as deck space for outdoor living. Expansion plans call for the glazing of the top deck for use as a living room and the development of the lower deck for use as an enclosed play area, a bath, and three more bedrooms. The swimming pool will be located underneath the lowest deck of the "stem," parallel to the "cross bar."

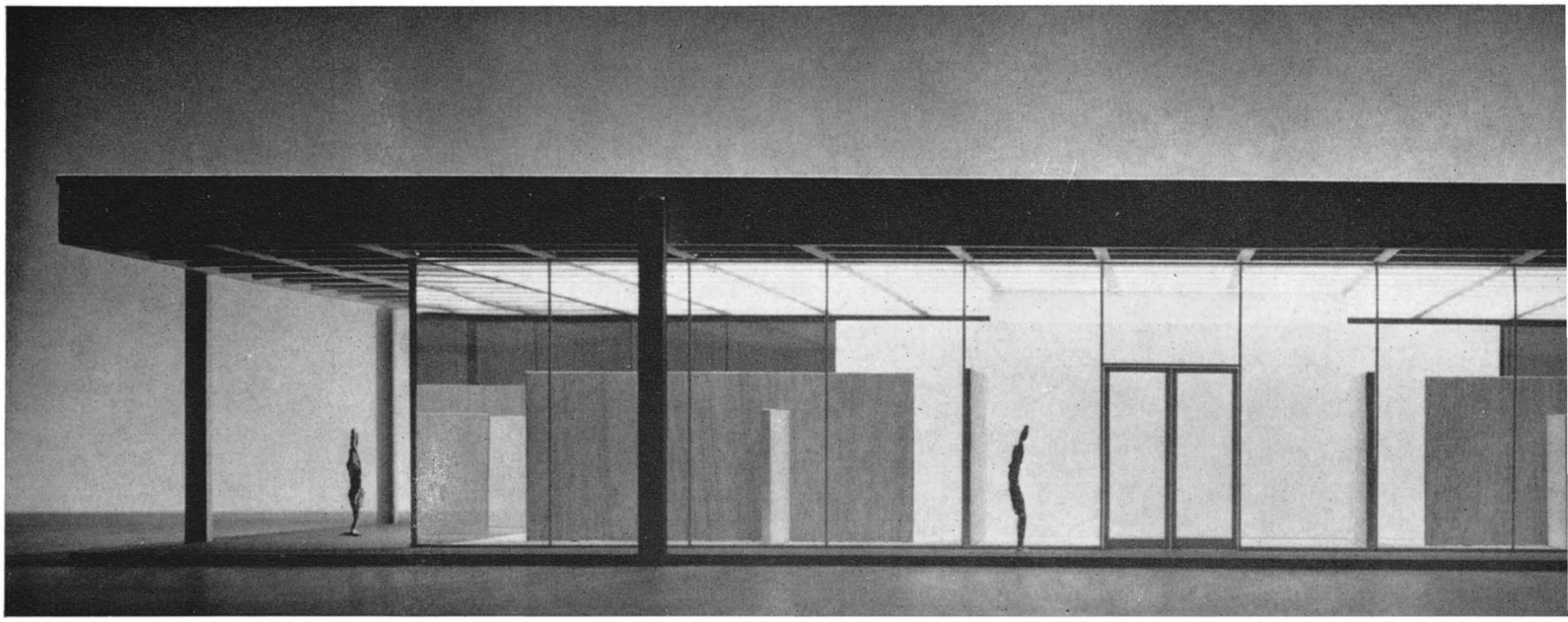
(Continued on page 28)







PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARVIN RAND



OFFICE BUILDING

BY COWELL AND NEUHAUS, ARCHITECTS

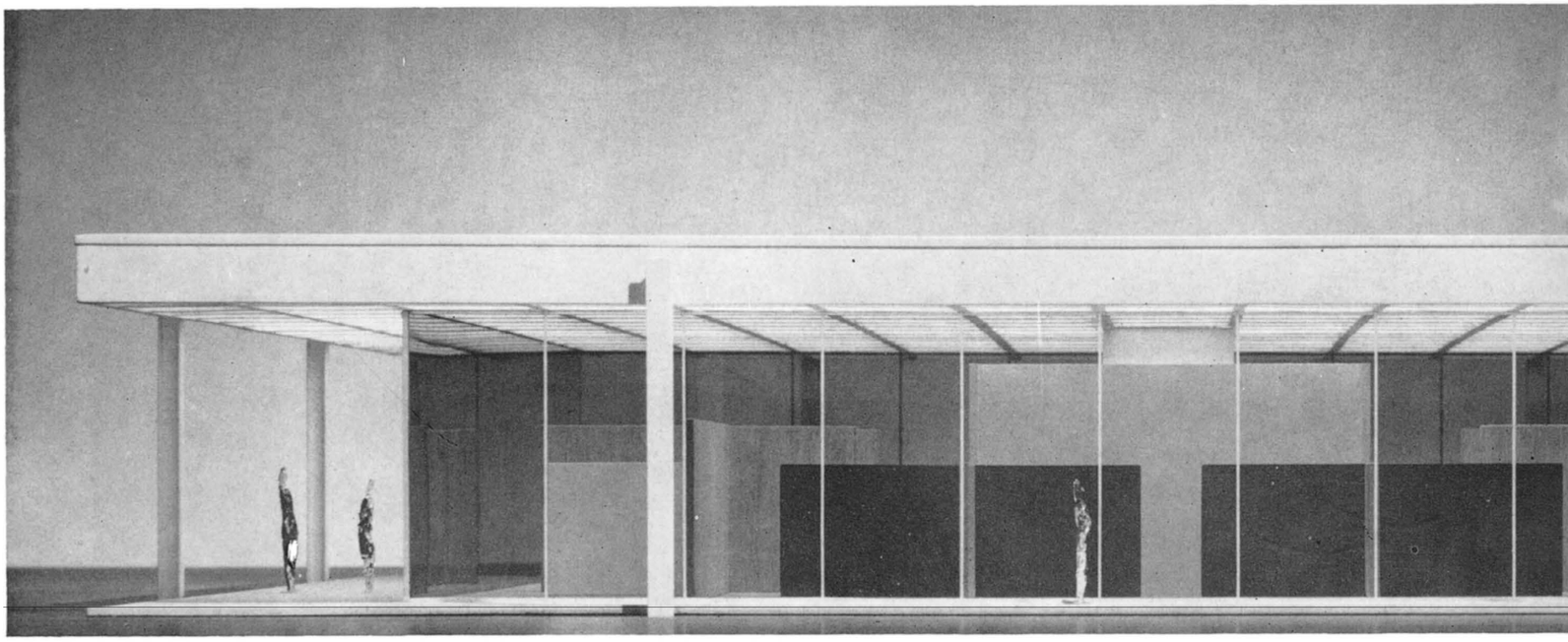
DAVID HAID, ASSOCIATE

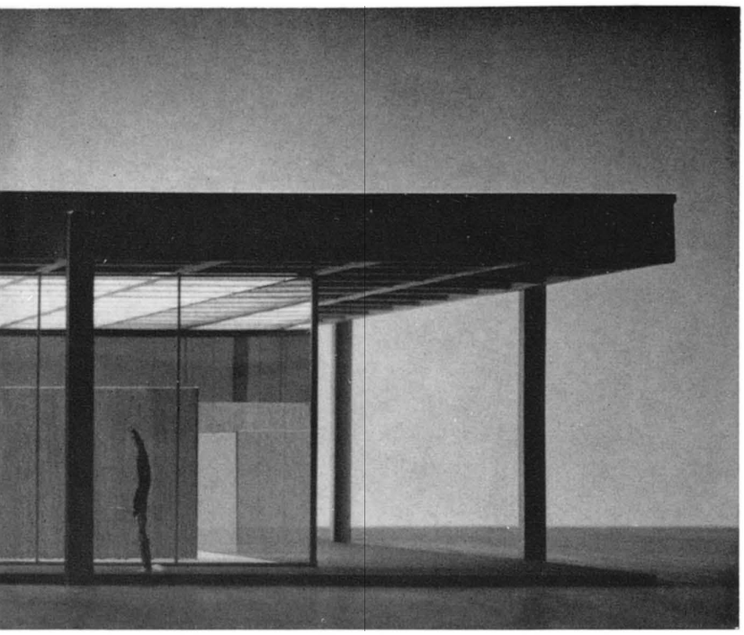
This office building is for the administrative staff of an oilfield refinery plant near Odessa, Texas. Facilities to be provided are offices, conference room, and lounge.

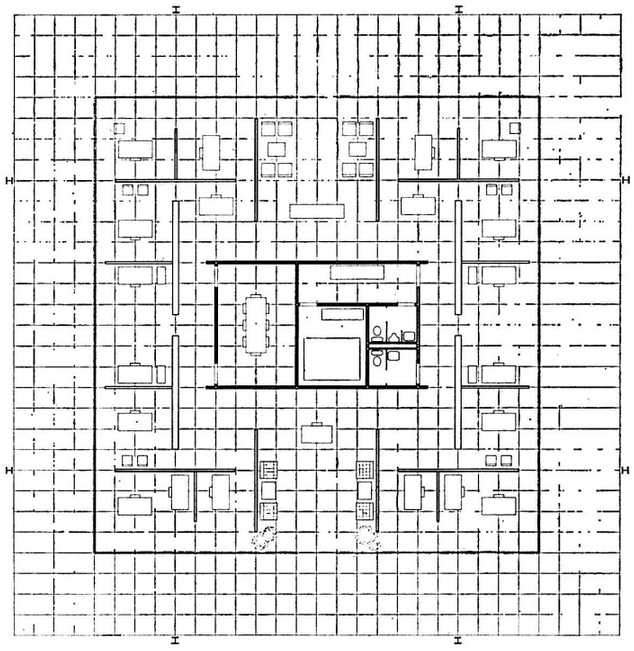
The reception area, offices and lounge are defined by free-standing walls six and eight feet high, and six-foot-high storage cabinets. The enclosed central core contains the conference room, toilets, storage and mechanical equipment.

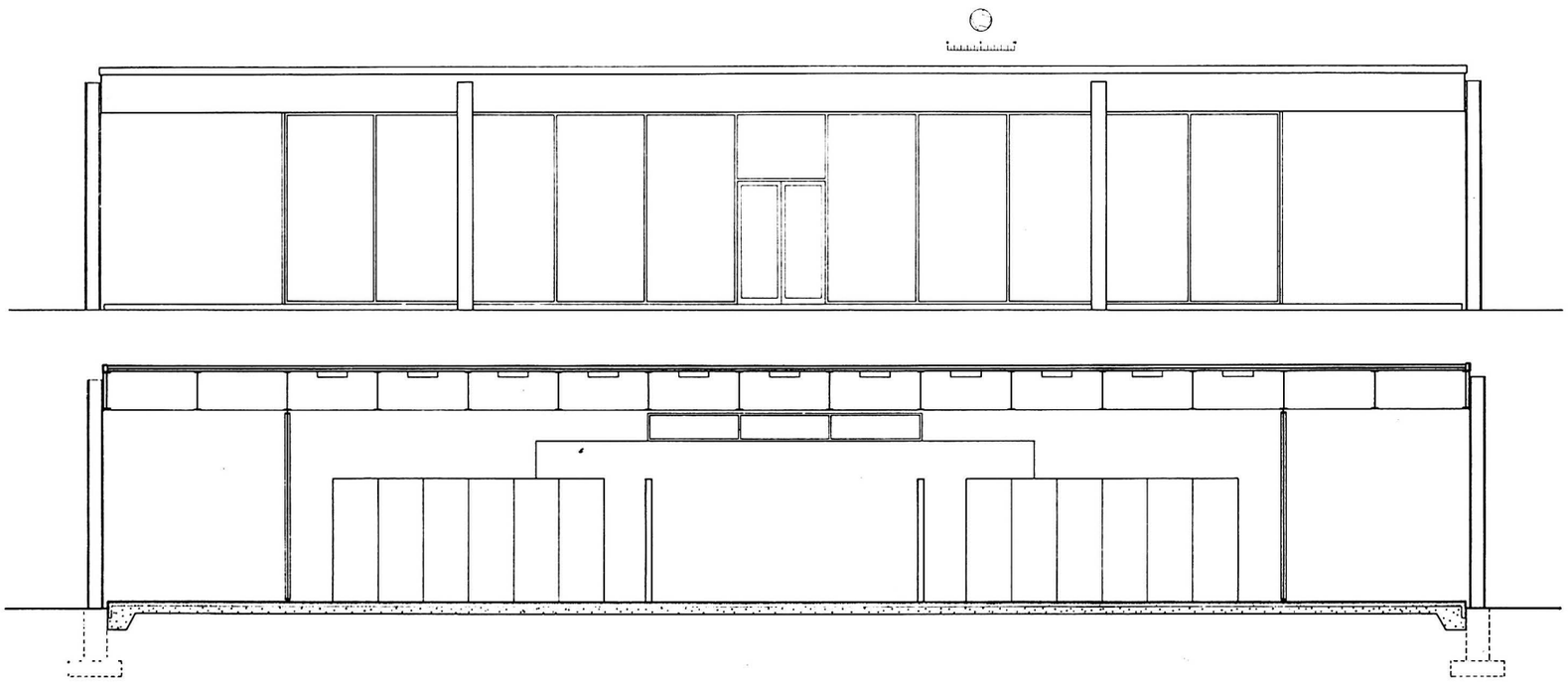
The structural system is a two-way steel grid forming a ninety by ninety-foot roof. The welded grid members are built up of quarter-inch web plates and five-inch-wide bar flanges. The roof is supported by two columns on each side, forty-two feet on center. The shop-fabricated structure will be assembled on the concrete floor slab, welded, and lifted as a unit into position on the columns, using lift slab equipment. The height to the underside of the exposed roof structure is twelve and one-half feet. During field assembly the roof grid will be cambered to provide for dead load deflection to a level plane. Metal deck, insulation and roofing complete the roof construction.

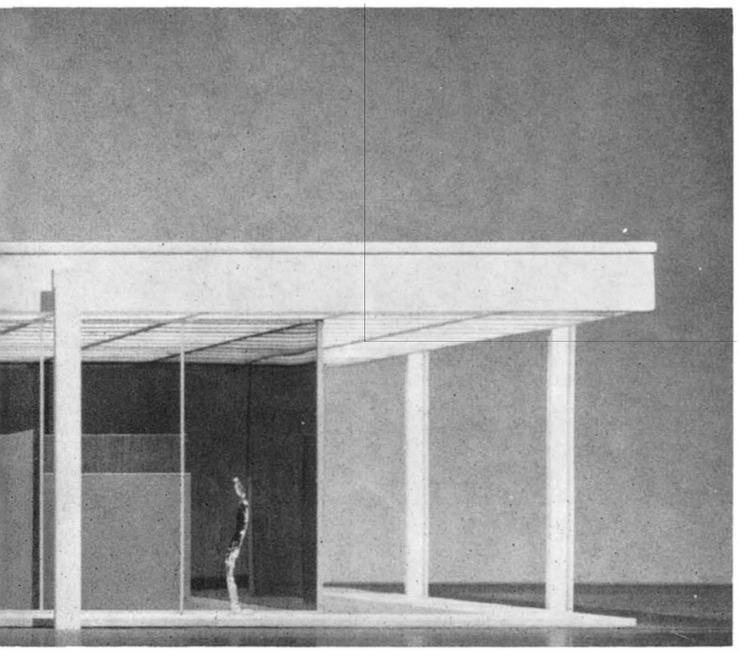
The glass, set twelve feet from the roof edge, is one-quarter inch gray polished plate in steel bar framing. A slip joint at the head allows for live load deflection of the roof. Finishes will be: white painted steel, terrazzo floor, natural and painted wood paneling and cabinets, and plaster on clay tile for the central core. Fluorescent lighting and acoustic tile will be applied to the underside of the metal deck above the roof grid. All utilities will be supplied from the refinery plant. The mechanical room contains the air handling unit and telephone equipment. Conditioned air will be supplied from above the central core and returned at the glass walls through under-slab ducts to the mechanical room.

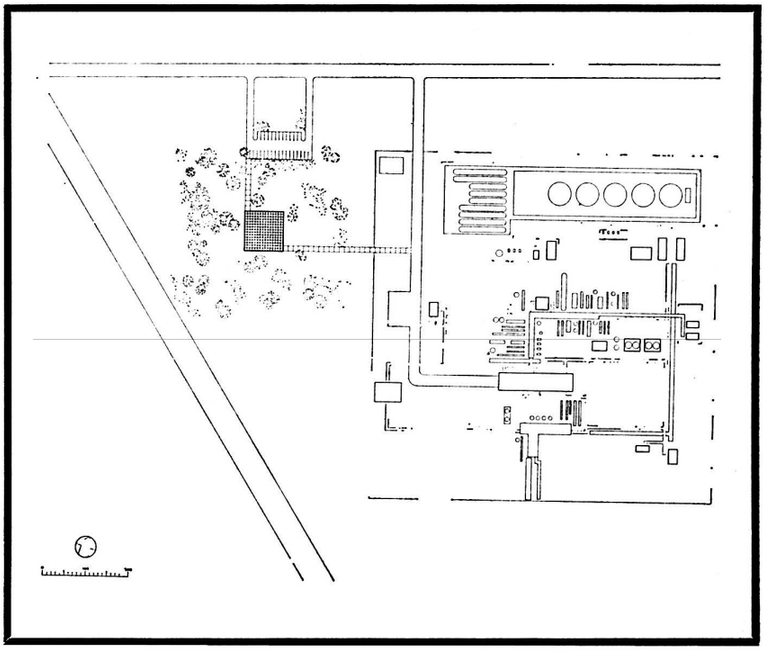


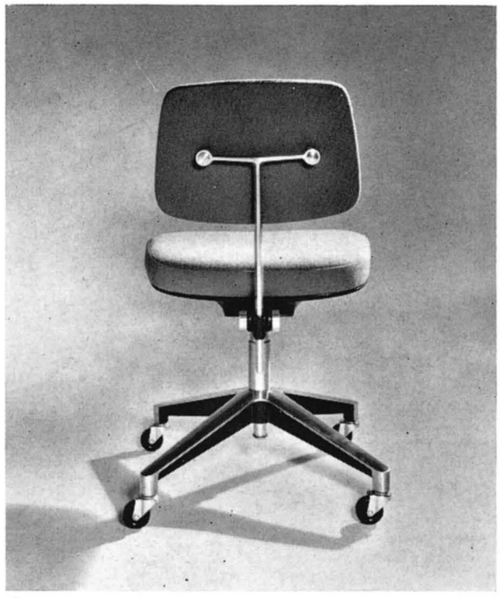












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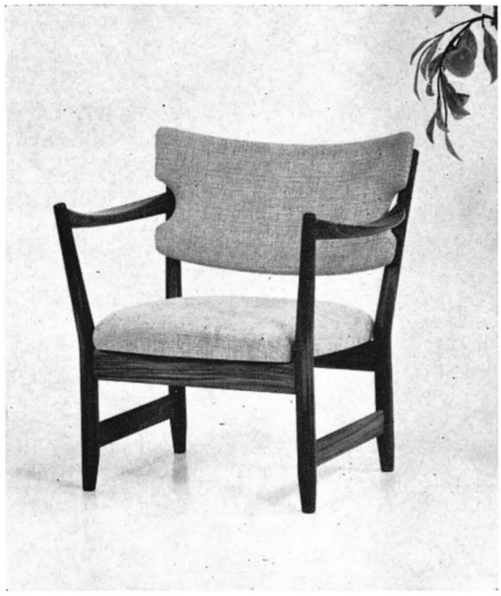

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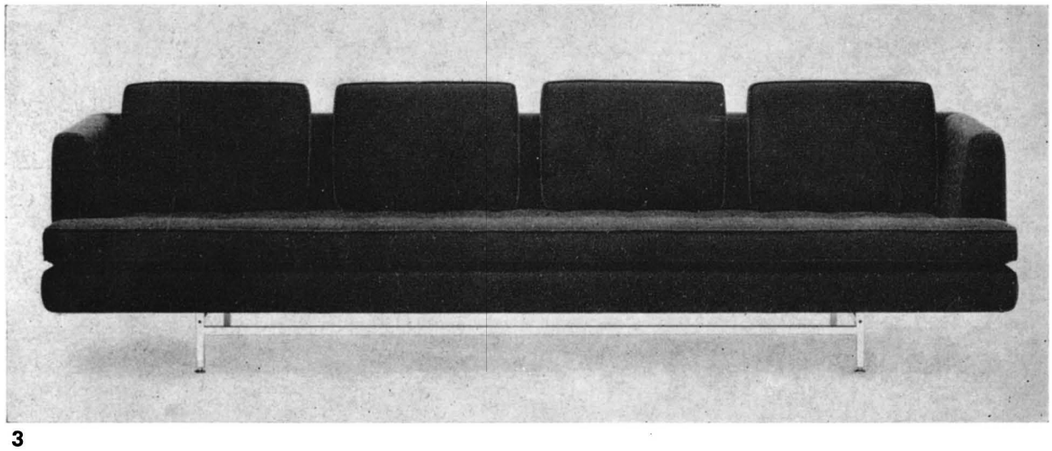
FURNITURE



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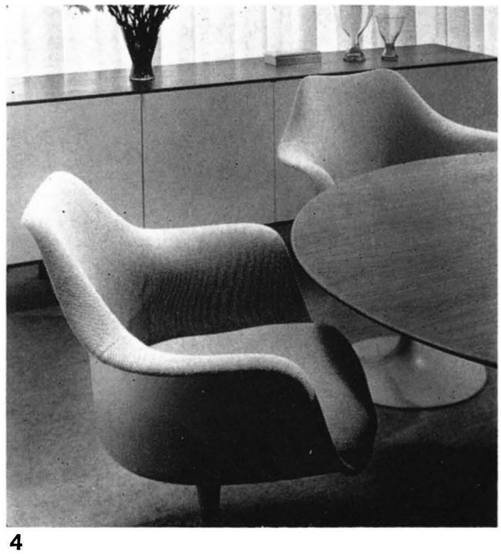

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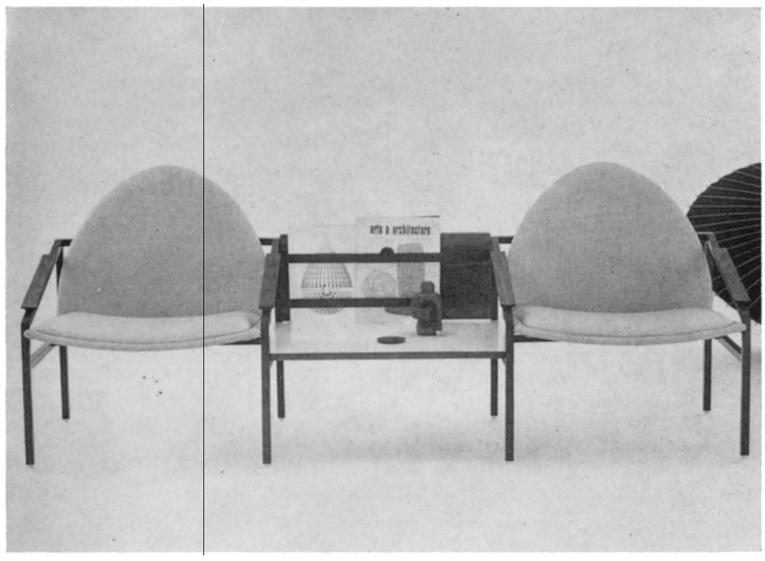

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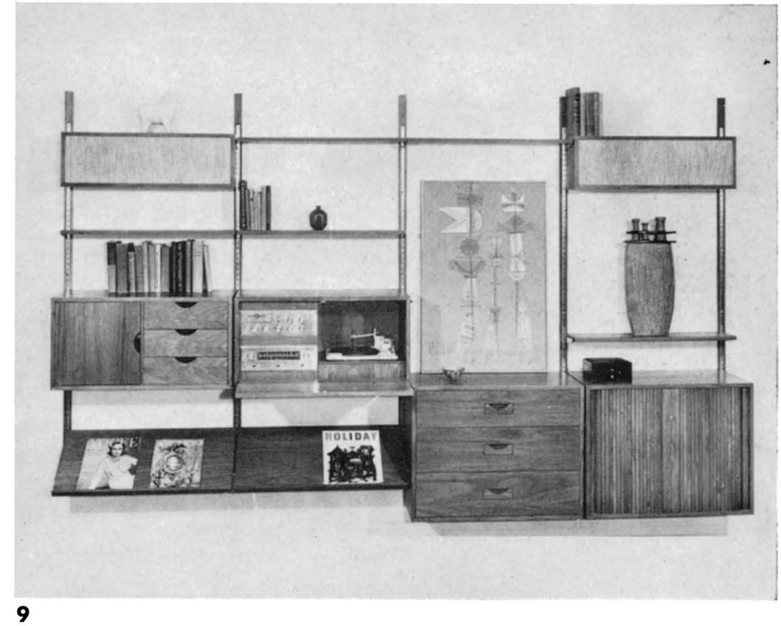

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10

1 Secretarial swivel chair designed by Max Pearson of Knoll's Design Development Group for Knoll Associates; the chair mechanism is incorporated within a cast aluminum seat pan; unsightly adjustment devices are eliminated; a cylindrical sleeve surrounding the center column is turned to raise and lower the seat position; two flush mounted aluminum knobs control the tension and the vertical and horizontal movements of the back rest; seat and back are upholstered in foam rubber.

2 From the Peter Wessel collection, the "Fireside Chair" designed by Rastad and Relling in Norway; carved teak frame, back and seat upholstered in wool, in clear contemporary colors.

3 120" long sofa with a hardwood upholstered frame over an aluminum base; the upholstered construction is rubber webbing, topped with foam rubber and polyether foam; Boris Kroll wool, viscose and nylon fabric; by George Kasparian for Kasparians.

4 New fully upholstered version of the single pedestal chairs designed by Eero Saarinen for Knoll Associates; fabric-covered foam rubber padding is permanently joined to the inside of the molded plastic shell; available in a new beige finish as well as white and light gray.

5 Three-seater in tubular metal with baked enamel finish in Jamaica brown, bound with black 100% plastic rope, reminiscent of horse hair; by Hendrik Van Keppel and Tay Green for Van Keppel-Green Corporation.

6 Bangkok teak sidechair imported from Sweden and designed by Nils Johnson; chair is 29½" high, 18½" wide and 18¼" deep; available with plastic, fabric or leather upholstery; distributed nationally by Moreddi, Inc.

7 New modular steel units by William Paul Taylor for Selected Designs,, Inc.; welded steel frame—white or ebony green baked enamel finish—combined with upholstered foam construction plywood seats, accented with hand-rubbed oil finish solid walnut arm rests; steel connecting bars allow any number of units in a continuous line. The magazine rack is walnut with steel connecting brackets.

8 John Stuart's Danish Craftsmen 80" long sofa has top grain leather button welting and reversible seat and arm cushions; teak deep lounge chair with interesting hand grips designed by Finn Juhl for John Stuart, Inc.

9 Wall units in walnut with hand-rubbed oil finish; all units have a standard width of 31-¾" for mounting on wall standards, spaced 32" on center; the cabinets lend themselves to countless variations; stereo console and speaker system also available; from Peter Wessel, Ltd.

10 This new chair, designed by Charles Eames for Herman Miller, Inc., will be put in production in October 1961; the chair has molded plastic shell and a cast aluminum base; the contour shaped upholstery varies in thickness to provide maximum seating comfort; the finish around the shell is a vinyl strip; designed for restaurant dining, the chair height is also table height, about 29".

HILLSIDE HOUSE—ZIMMERMAN

(Continued from page 22)

The structural system is composed of Bethlehem Steel 4-inch WF 13 columns, eight feet on center for the length of the house and twenty-four feet on center for the depth of the house. Seismic loads were accommodated by "X" bracing composed of steel rods. These rods were placed on the lower portion of the deck and on the lower portion of the two end bays on the main house front. An egg crate system of 2 x 16-inch joists was used for underflooring on the lower decks. Other materials used are Douglas Fir wood siding, 2 x 4 Douglas fir wood decking and glass.

NOTES ON EXPRESSION AND COMMUNICATION — KEPES

(Continued from page 17)

If the spatial network of a city is logical and its physical patterning clear and legible, then the people will be able to perform their complex activities efficiently. There is a threshold beyond which social intercourse becomes impossible. Our simple perceptual processes select and edit the complex visual field until a meaningful hierarchy of significant shapes arises. Similarly, in the intricate pattern of group communication in an extended environment there is a need to break up the complex field into distinct groups and units and then relate them in a functional and logical pattern. The bigger the city area, the greater the need to make the component parts (buildings, streets, districts) distinct in character and with clearly defined boundaries. They must be sensed not only in their individual characteristics but as a part of the over-all background pattern. The individuality of a group or unit must also be realized in its functional connectedness with the social, economic, and cultural whole of the city. Thus, the physical makeup of the urban environment must not only take the individual units into consideration, but these distinctly perceived separate features must also be grasped in their relation to the spatial and functional fibers of the whole.

The increasing differentiation of the city offers a wide variety of scenes. Each city possesses a total personality, yet it contains a broad spectrum of individually characteristic units. The increasing scope of the living space of a city brings a greater variety of stimulation, opportunities, and vistas to explore and exploit. If the city can be structured and unified, therefore, the increase in complexity becomes an asset. No richness is added, however, through the mere multiplication of identical units or areas. Only a disciplined differentiation of the city offers perceptual challenges such as contribute to a city environment that is emotionally and intellectually stimulating. The difference between the impact of continuous challenge on the mechanical and on the organic level is clearly put in a phrase from D'Arcy Thompson: "The soles of our shoes wear thin through use, but the soles of our feet become strong through it." The challenge created by the wide range of stimulations coming from a well-differentiated and at the same time well-articulated environment is an important factor in the growth of knowledge, in richness of experience, and in civic connectedness.

Differentiation must be purposeful. The variation in character among city areas has to be consistent with realities; otherwise articulation becomes tiresome repetition. Extreme contrasts—for example, the contrast between a wealthy residential and an impoverished slum area—defy articulation because of a gap too wide for bridging and they attenuate the potential unity of the city. But open squares, narrow streets, a tranquil park, a business area, or a well-sheltered residential section—all are perceived more clearly, more intensely, and more characteristically if they are in proper proportion to one another in size and distance, and in proper order in the sequential circulation pattern of the city. In any artistic creation, varied elements have to be brought to a common goal. A city must find a structure in which a wide range of elements is brought into a common functioning whole through gradations, contrasting boundaries, rhythmically repeated similarities. A well-harmonized basic spatial pattern can be greatly helpful in manipulating group life, mixing people, or keeping them separated, as necessary. At the same time, however, it is imperative that this pattern be flexible enough to permit new orientation via improved technology, changes in custom, and new groupings.

A city form that has such unity does more than facilitate the life within it. The richness, inner logic, and harmony of units in an urban environment function symbolically. In a certain sense, there arises an artistic creation that stimulates sensibilities, increases sensitivity to surroundings, and transforms attitudes.

From DAEDALUS *(The Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences) Winter, 1961, and* THE FUTURE METROPOLIS, *edited by Lloyd Rodwin, published by George Braziller, Inc. By permission of George Braziller, Inc.*

(First part of an article to be continued in the September issue)

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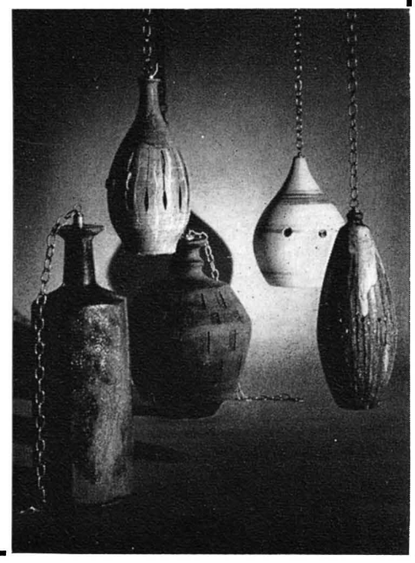

MUSIC

(Continued from page 6)

watching one of the most fully conceived, spiritually and technically independent dramas of the 20th century. The drama could not subsist without its music, yet had no operatic need of it.

As Brecht wrote in the *Threepenny Opera* notes: "Nothing is more revolting than when the actor pretends not to notice that he has left the level of plain speech and started to sing. The three levels—plain speech, heightened speech and singing—must always remain distinct. . . . As for the melody, he must not follow it blindly: there is a kind of speaking-against-the-music which can have strong effects; the results of a stubborn, incorruptible sobriety which is independent of music and rhythm." Partch did the same but very differently than Brecht; the three levels remain distinct but tightly intermingled.

Where was the music? Stacked up on platforms at each side of the stage, the great shapes of the Partch instruments towered like a cubist mountain, an abstract skyscraper, the solo strings sitting among them. The black-clad instrumentalists lighted their small lights or switched them off as they played or sat silent, as one sees the light and darkening of windows at a distance. The two towers of instruments at once loomed and vanished.

What was the music doing? It preluded, accompanied, supplemented and complemented, set atmosphere, broke into interjections. I shall be fascinated to hear the music without the action and learn what there is of it. A strong new element had been added, the brass—military, jazzy, and at the end projecting

the tragic revelation in dissonant chords. The brass added the sustained weight Partch's expressive medium has needed.

Someone complained to me that the musical themes were commonplace. They were so deliberately, as was the language, the lazy, insistent motion of the dancers, the terrifying grass-roots nostalgia which was becoming the real tragedy of the implicit drama. What had begun and been dismissed by many of us, years ago, as "corn" had become, in this ritual expression of the commonplace, the meaning of the action.

Later that night in the Courthouse Park before the illuminated back-screen the crowd gathers watching fireworks, singing "These Good Old-Fashioned Thrills." The band lines up across the back. The second revel begins: "Not So Young," a ritual for adolescent girls and brass, drops to the primeval in another ground-touching circling dance, through which the unmasked Bacchae and Dion swing like sorceresses and priest. The dance breaks diagonally; stagehands roll out a red carpet, and tumblers spring from it over the crowd; at the climax of this decent Midwestern orgy of the Golden Calf a tumbler leaps from his hidden trampoline behind the band almost to the proscenium. (The gym team were so pleased at being included they invited Partch to bring his instruments and perform a special composition, "Rotate the Body in all its Planes," at the NCAA national gym finals the same weekend).

The play continues through the transvestitism of Pentheus into the Fourth Chorus. Mom, mother of Sonny, "ghost-walking, witnesses an attack upon her son," while the two quiet pairs behind her reenact the silent sexual ritual. Again the song and chant, the vocal sorrowing of the solo figure breaks in upon the silence, a living loneliness and fear and longing, that now bears all the meaning of the action. One woman said to me: "No one who has been here will leave the hall the same." Each of us had been entangled with his private past.

I despair of transmitting through words the speechless power of the atmosphere of these two solo scenes, that of the male Sonny towards the beginning, that of the female Mom towards the end. Not characters or persons, they are foci of living fact. Neither encounters the other during the play, except by report, until the final entrance. Yet the relationship is drawn so close that they are shown related in every act of body and mind, the son seeking and fearing the mother, the mother seeking and sorrowing for the son; and the sexual tie binds them and binds us—by no shock effect, as it is usually attempted, but through our own deliberative awareness of emotional response.

The third mask descends into the hands of Mom-Agave, mother of Sonny-Pentheus, and the play becomes one with the nostalgic agon of the drama. Scene Four: Agave comes out of the night bearing the head of her son, believing it to be the head of a lion, killed by a woman's hands. Drama and play end together in the revelation, when she removes the mask of Agave and drops it to lie beside the head of Pentheus. "Rays of the early morning sun strike horizontally across the Courthouse Park," as Dion-Dionysus, no longer wearing the golden staghorn mask of his triumph, enters and stands silently behind her—the archaic ritualistic gesture of the priest after the sacrifice.

Apart from the instruments, there was only one visual stage prop, a fountain, surmounted by the nursery-picture figures of a man and a girl, topped by a black umbrella. This was rolled out during the Courthouse scenes and rolled off during the Greek scenes. If you get it, you do get it. No use going on about the grass-roots and nostalgia and the sublimated corn. Fifty years of stiff and difficult American theatre have aimed in this direction. If you prefer to opt for the self-conscious Orpheus of Tennessee Williams, so be it. Here in Illinois was the Revelation without the starch, the theatrically plotted symbolism, the hysteria, the second-hand sophistication. The sophistic audience goes to see what it expects; great theatre discovers what the audience cannot expect. Here is another in the succession of American musical shows which are neither light opera nor grand opera: *Of Thee I Sing, The Cradle Will Rock, Show Boat, Four Saints in Three Acts, The Mother of Us All, Carousel, Oklahoma!, Porgy and Bess.* None of them has been enshrined by the Met.

I must commend John Garvey, the conductor, who held together this most complex undertaking as simply as the text demands, the orchestra, the several actors, the leaders of the chorus, in fact the whole controlled mob, of whom so many varied talents were required. The University of Illinois should be proud of students and music faculty who can put such a show together, and of its composer-in-residence, Harry Partch, at last come into his kingdom in these rich surroundings.

NOTES IN PASSING

(Continued from page 9)

pondering when he framed his new ideals of design. The practical need generated a social and psychological conception, and this in turn led to certain expressive choices. Thus wide-open space, long vistas, unbroken and reflecting surfaces became esthetic elements; that is, sights pleasing in themselves as well as adapted to mass use and mass production.

These choices were reinforced by the other new fact, the presence of new materials. In 1900 steel was the great new acquisition, and the love of it first inflamed the engineers. It was a bridge-builder, Gustave Eiffel, who first imagined the delight of building a great openwork tower of steel, for the Paris World's Fair of 1889. It is noteworthy that the French mills at that date were unable to turn out the required quantity of metal needed for the construction. And equally indicative is the public response to the masterpiece. During the fair it was admired and gaped at as an outsize toy, but afterwards everybody supposed that the curiosity would be taken down. When this did not happen, the most eminent guardians of good taste—artists and men of letters—signed a petition pleading for immediate dismantling. But for the fact that governments always dislike petitions, the first great monument of steel frame construction would no longer exist.

It was left to an American, Louis Sullivan, to produce the first buildings hung upon such a steel frame. Characteristically, it was the Transportation Building at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 that signalized the innovation. Technology and transportation turned from destroyers of art and artists to sources of Inspiration and Possibility. Sullivan's steel-frame skeleton supplied the modern parallel of a new Gothic architecture for a new medieval mass society. Modern and Gothic agree that walls do not support or constitute the edifice; they merely fill in the blanks between pillars whose inter-locking *is* the new form. To put it differently, walls are simple partitions between the client and the weather;

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they could be omitted were he not so fussy about his health and comfort.

Since buildings are for shelter, however, walls are usual, and the new art found a new material with which to make them esthetically new and endlessly adaptable. That material was reinforced concrete and its use by Auguste Perret early in the century is the second great innovation of the new age, affecting form and texture as well as answering aspiration. For in the twentieth-century Gothic, other needs than religious instruction, entertainment, and worship determined architectural design. The violent changes I mentioned in the perception of time and space, coupled with the spiritual effect of anonymity, induced in the sensitive artist a relentless tendency toward abstraction. I mean by this the urge to bring out the geometry of things, the love of *fleshlessness*, characteristic of all the twentieth-century arts. You may wonder how airplane speed or motion pictures or anonymous crowds lead the sensuous artist to such an abstract ideal as abstraction. The connection is quite simple. Abstraction is the natural result when the observer moves: detail is lost, contours flatten out; softness turns rigid; what is left is the framework. Look at the loveliest landscape from above, at a fast clip, and what you see is an abstract, geometrical pattern, in which the shadows lose their earthly function of giving roundness and become, like everything else, angular patches. Use the motion picture camera at a distorted speed or angle and you abstract out of faces and objects their lifelikeness, leaving an equivalent pattern like some unusual map projection.

As for the human mass, it is abstract by sheer statistical richness and the impossibility of focusing on any one individual. Perhaps the famous Nude Descending the Staircase, by Marcel Duchamp, is the best demonstration of the visual result. The figure in the picture is not at any one step on the staircase; it has no recognizable face, age, sex, or identifying feature; is it grave or gay, beautiful or ugly, rich or poor? We do not know and do not care: it is representative; it is abstract man in motion seen by the light of a new consciousness.

But how does the modern architect abstract? For the most part quite naturally. He does not have to dig out his framework; he starts with it, and it is of course fleshless. Since he believes in showing underlying forms without disguise, his outer covering will be flat, with strong edges reproducing the original simplicity of his skeleton. Again, the repetition of simple forms, chiefly right angles, will give the beholder a geometrical design in which straight lines and intersecting planes predominate—a Cubist painting against the sky, or the patchy earth seen from the air.

Nor is it only for convenience that the modern architect chooses to leave surfaces bare, or at most tolerates a semitraditional low relief sculpture over his doorway. Unbroken flatness has the double intention of increasing the apparent scale and preventing the eye of anonymous man from dwelling on the particular. Within bare walls of some size even a large crowd will be dwarfed. In this regard, modern monuments achieve not a Gothic but an Egyptian impressiveness. And in the absence of rich and varied decoration—in the absence of any decoration—the mind is filled only by the single idea of abstract space, conveyed simply by light or color. Nothing else is provided as a visual resting place—no carved trefoil or gilded molding, no cherub's face or leafy vegetation, to entice the senses and suggest to the beholder that only particular objects exist and that abstraction is an empty dream.

If I have not led you astray, the aspirations of the twentieth century considered as a new age have concentrated on giving form to the strange sensations born of speed, the conquest of empty space, and the pressure of men taken in the mass. To the obvious industrial and technological sources of these new feelings, science and philosophy added the new conceptions of relativity and simultaneity, which also have visual embodiments. Just as the people of our century were the first to find beauty in a machine—even in a well-polished piece of a machine, so the new physics was the first science to provide spectrographs and tracks of particles which can be hung on the wall like pictures. It could be said that the creator of the cosmos was a modern artist. All the arts of our age have returned the compliment by reflecting these remote experiences. No art, perhaps, has been so fully responsive as architecture. Certainly it began the revolution in the common mind. It was the first to be "modern" by breaking away from the intense individualism of the Symbolist period of art-for-art's-sake; the first to acknowledge the claims of collective life, and to democratize the new taste. One is not surprised that this was so, for architecture is by its nature an art for men in groups. But modern architecture was first also by virtue of its awareness that the life of the city would have to be planned. The previous century had developed industry haphazardly, as chance and competition dictated. To repair the damage and make use of new knowledge, industrial democracy must apply to its evolution the techniques of the engineer and the architect: full specifications, detailed plans, coordination with existing and future artifacts. From the days of Patrick Geddes the ultimate aspiration of the modern architect has been to design not merely a building or a cluster of buildings but the shelter of a whole civilization.

It will not have escaped your notice that in sketching the cultural environment of the modern architect, I have repeatedly gone back to origins and found them in the first decade of this century. I have done this for what I consider good reasons, of which one is the very source of my interest in the subject. I mean that I and the art whose half century we are celebrating were infants together, and rather intimate. Almost my earliest memories are of architectural discussions among my elders, at the house of one of the founders of modern architecture, the great apostle of reinforced concrete, Auguste Perret. That house, which he built for himself at 25 bis rue Franklin, was the first modern apartment house in Paris. Going into it with my parents, I would often see, to my continued surprise, little knots of sightseers outside, snickering and pontificating and occasionally struck dumb—by its height, its multiple exposure to light and air, its ceramic facade. I remember also, in the ground floor offices of the Perret brothers, the drawings of their modern constructions in Morocco, and of the Theatre des Champs Elysees in Paris. And it was in another house built by Perret, not far from the first, that I saw him for the last time, a few years before his death in 1954.

If I evoke his memory here, it is not solely out of personal and historical piety, nor as an indication of the ease with which the amateur, if caught young enough, accepts a new style without a murmur. My chief reason for venturing to mention these biographical details is to suggest that when we look for the aspirations of our age and their strongest expression in art we

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must turn to the decade when Perret and his peers set their hands to lasting work, the decade before the first World War, the decade which posterity is beginning to call "The Cubist Decade."

I know that in common opinion Modernism is dated from the 1920's. This is the effect of the cultural hiatus produced by the four devouring years 1914-1918. It was *before* 1914 that all the new and living ideas of our age were stated and embodied. After the war some of those were forgotten, others rediscovered as if new, still others carried forward in the full knowledge of their ancestry. Thanks to these latter a kind of dammed-up pressure of repetition and expansion finally broke through the crust of public indifference. To speak of architecture alone, the International style came into its own in the mid-20's, concurrently with the superb flowering of the decorative arts, which in the thirties gave us mass-produced modern furniture and the first infiltration of suburban modern—a third of a century after the creation of the parent genre.

Meanwhile the great disciples, the prolific geniuses of the second generation, those who had studied with Sullivan or Perret or had seen their works, were establishing the individual styles which will give them and our age enduring renown. It would be sheer presumption to try to add by words to the fame that such men as Wright, van der Rohe, Gropius, and Le Corbusier have won with their own hands. It is more fitting, as well as more profitable, to ask what, if any, new aspirations disclose themselves in the present confusion which the works of these men so easily dominate. In other words, if the first half of our century has magnificently worked out the theorems proposed in the very first decade of the age, do we now simply refine and repeat the solutions, or are there new needs and possibilities leading to new fulfillments?

I think the question can be answered without having recourse to prophecy. For one clear tendency of the latest architecture implies the existence of a desire as yet unsatisfied. I have in mind the various attempts to break the regularity of the geometrical with rounded or asymmetric shapes. One thinks of churches shaped like a whale or like the extended wings of a bat, of private houses reared on the principle of the bivalve or modeled after the double boiler, one thinks of the convoluted helix of Wright's last work, the Guggenheim Museum, which seems a pleasing approximation to the geography of Dante's Hell. The aspiration to which these are answers might be put in the form of a problem: how to reconcile the spacious, smooth bareness which dwarfs mankind, the practical and functional which rebuke the fancy, the control of every medium which leaves no sense of difficulty overcome—how to reconcile all these virtues with the passion of the human soul for the wayward, the irregular, the unexpected, the miraculous.

I say the reconciliation, not the substitution of one set of virtues for the other. Only by the strong combination of opposites will the sense of freedom and miracle be aroused. When we have functionalism and fancy, easy mastery *and* the sublimity of a tour de force, magnitude *and* human dignity, we may have what the contemporary mind and the genius of architecture are uneasily groping for.

This is neither the place nor the time to brandish a T-square and issue a call to arms, even if I thought the spectacle might inspire my colleagues. But a caution above movements and aspirations is perhaps in order, by way of valedictory to our acknowledged heroes and salute to those to come. The caution is: let the artist aspire freely, on any basis of thought and feeling and in any direction. But let him beware of "ideas." The great expressive artist is not indeed a thoughtless man, but neither is he a selfconscious man who tightly grips a merely plausible or paradoxical notion. The great mind that can fulfill aspirations should cultivate a calm indifference to notions, and especially to slogans. He will, let us say, build arcades around an office building because he likes their appearance and feels their attraction for the passerby. But he will not do so because he has read a sociological work which says that the modern world lacks "community" and arcades will correct the deficiency. The modern artist is peculiarly vulnerable to this error because there are so many books lying about and he has learned to read—in fact to read *and* write. It is deplorable for art that modern artists have been put by the public under the necessity of defending or expounding their works. Few can do it and keep from succumbing sooner or later to an idea in the sense I mean of a rigid and unexamined proposition. For whatever may be the case in logic, in art truth does not reside in propositions. It resides in objects, and those objects must, like a living being, be the fruit of desire as much as forethought, of brooding care as much as clear intelligence.

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(252a) Stained Glass Windows: 1" to 2" thick chipped colored glass embedded in cement reinforced with steel bars. A new conception of glass colored in the mass displays decomposing and refracting lights. Design from the pure abstract to figurative modern in the tradition of 12th century stained glass. For brochure write to Roger Darricarrere, 1937 San Fernando Road, Los Angeles 65, Calif.

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✔ (326a) Construction Plywood: A new fir plywood catalog for 1958 has been announced by the Douglas Fir Plywood Association. Indexed for A.I.A. filing systems, the three-part, 20-page catalog presents basic information on fir plywood standard grades and specialty products for architects, engineers, builders, product design engineers, and building code officials. Sample copies may be obtained without charge from: Douglas Fir Plywood Association, Tacoma 2, Wash.

✔ (349a) Available from the West Coast Lumbermen's Association is an excellent 44-page catalog entitled: "Douglas Fir Lumber — Grades and Uses." This well illustrated catalog includes detailed descriptions of boards, finish, joists and panels, and light framing with several full-page examples of each; conversion tables, stresses, weights, properties of Douglas fir. For a copy write to: West Coast Lumbermen's Association, 1410 S.W. Morrison Street, Portland 5, Oregon.

(208a) Texture One-Eleven Exterior Fir Plywood: This new grooved panel material of industry quality, is in perfect harmony with trend toward using natural wood textures. Packaged in two lengths and widths; has shiplap edges; applied quickly, easily; immune to water, weather, heat, cold. Uses include: vertical siding for homes; screening walls for garden areas; spandrels on small apt., commercial buildings; inexpensive store front remodeling; interior walls, ceiling, counters. For detailed information, write Dept. AA, Douglas Fir Plywood Association, Tacoma 2, Washington.

SURFACE TREATMENTS

✔ (361a) Completely new full-color 28-page catalog of Mosaic ceramic tile manufactured in California and distributed throughout the area west of the Rockies. First presentation in booklet form of tile in the Harmonitone color families; includes decorated glazed wall tile, new Staccato palette in one inch square tile, and Byzantile. Catalog available upon request from The Mosaic Tile Company, 131 North Robertson Boulevard, Beverly Hills, California.

✔ (362a) Ceramic Tile: Brochures, samples and catalogs of Pomona Tile's line of glazed ceramics are available to qualified building professionals. Included are "Tile-Photos," full color, actual size, reproductions of Pomona's Distinguished Designer Series of Sculptured and Decorator Tile. This series features unique designs by many of America's foremost designers including George Nelson, Paul McCobb, Saul Bass and Dong Kingman. Pomona Tile also offers a complete line of glazed floor and wall tile in 42 decorator colors. For further information write: Pomona Tile Manufacturing Co., 621-33 North La Brea Avenue, Los Angeles 36, California.

TAPESTRIES

(379a) Tapestries: Largest group of handwoven and handhooked tapestries . . . bold colors. Designed by Evelyn Ackerman. Executed in Mexico and other parts of the world. Special designs can be executed. For further information write: Era Industries, 2207 Federal Avenue, Los Angeles 64, California.

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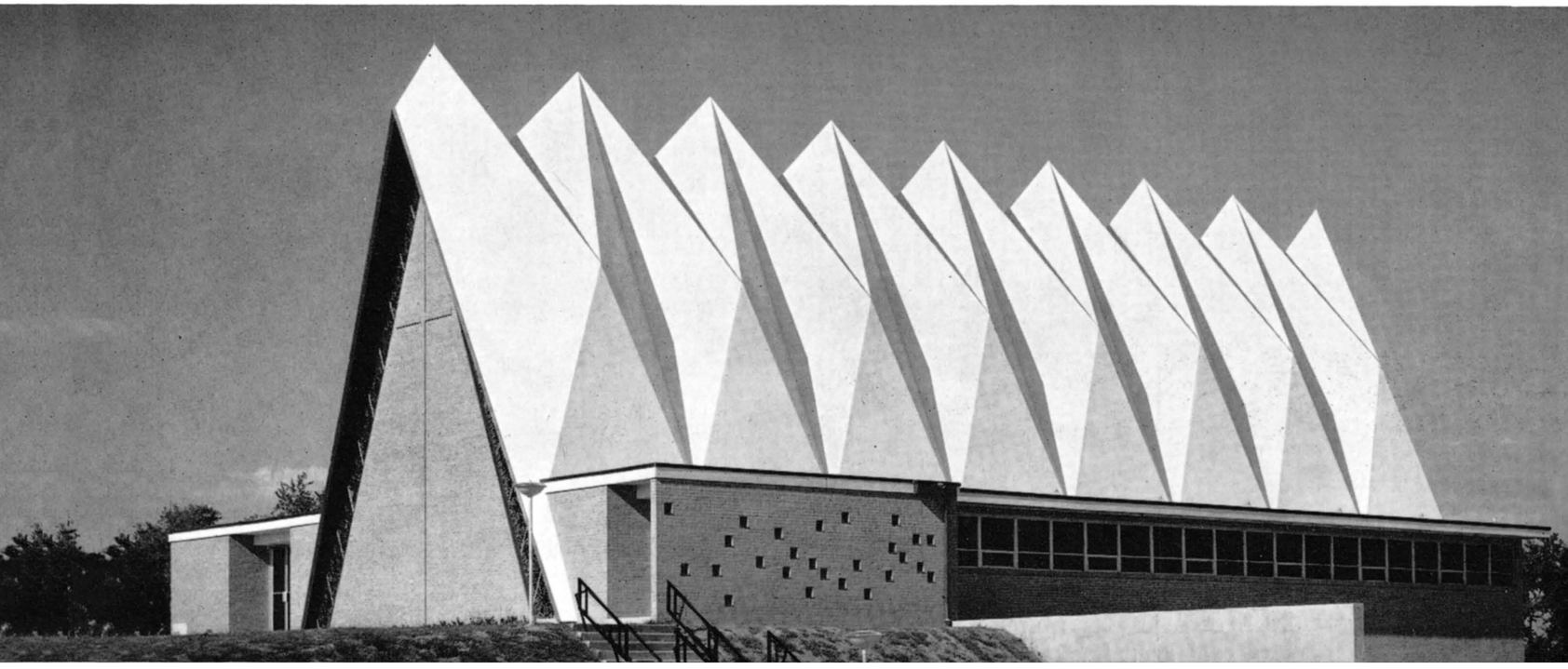
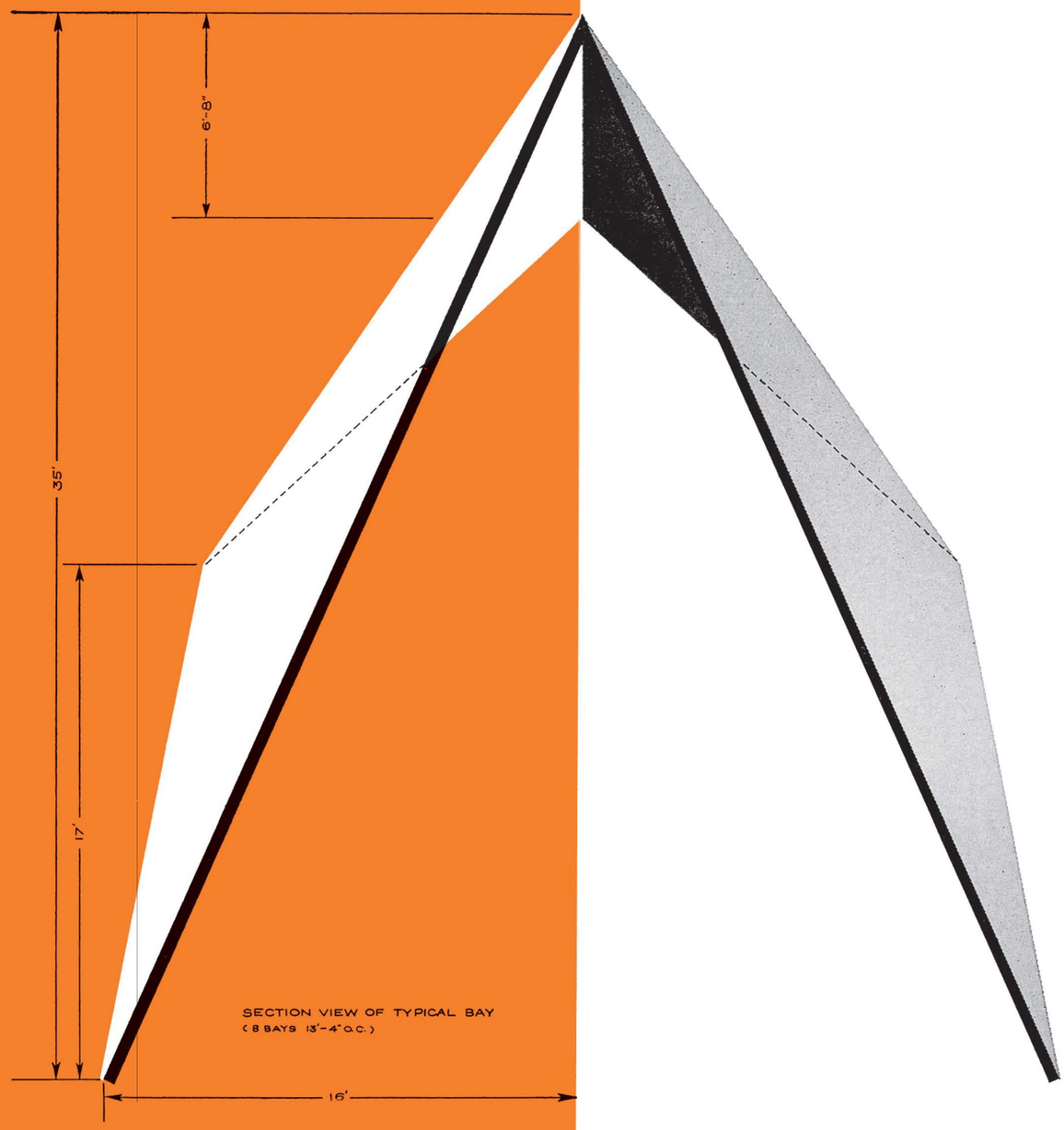
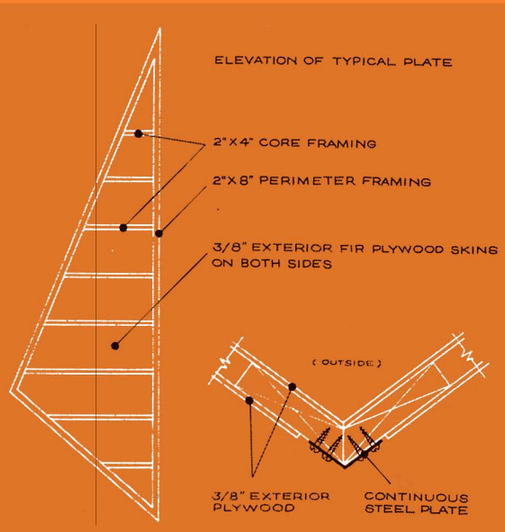
the most exciting ideas take shape in fir plywood







INDEPENDENT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

LOCATION:	St. Louis
ARCHITECTS:	Manske & Dieckmann, St. Louis
COMPONENTS:	Roof Structures, Inc., Webster Groves, Mo.
BUILDER:	A. H. Haeseler, St. Louis

THE NINE SOARING PINNACLES of this church, recalling the boldness of Gothic arches, are a vigorous expression of advancing plywood technology. The roof is a space plane, a step beyond the folded plate with more versatility than any other clear-span technique using wood.

Like all folded plates, the space plane acquires strength and rigidity from interaction of inclined plywood diaphragms. But its components may take shapes other than rectangular, to create more complex designs. Here they are triangular stressed skin panels. Forces are transferred from one to another, and the entire multi-faceted roof becomes a lid-like shell, supported only at edges. Steel buttresses anchored to foundations absorb lateral thrusts. Clear-span area is 32′ x 110′.

The absence of framework or posts is only one of several advantages this roof shares with space planes in general. It went up fast (15 days); huge plywood components were precisely fabricated to insure exact fit. Prefabrication also guaranteed close cost control and quality of workmanship and materials. In-place cost compared well with other means of obtaining a similar span.

For basic fir plywood design data, write (USA only) Douglas Fir Plywood Assn., Tacoma 2, Wash.

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